

THE MUSLIMS OF SRI LANKA UNDER THE BRITISH RULE

BY

Dr. M.N.M. KAMIL ASAD Ph.D.(Edin.)

NAVRANG

1993

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To my father

The Hon. M.H.M. Naina Marikar
Minister of Finance
Government of Sri Lanka
(1988-1989)

FOREWORD

It is always a pleasure for a supervisor to introduce the publication of one of his former student's works. That pleasure is increased when, as here, he feels that the work concerned will add significantly to our knowledge of a not unimportant subject. Dr. Kamil Asad has set out to trace the history of the Muslims of Sri Lanka, chiefly in the modern period. This is not a subject which, until recently, has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. And if it does enjoy greater prominence today, this is, sadly, largely the outcome of recent discontents in the island and a desire to understand why the social consensus of some earlier centuries seems to have fallen apart into the antagonisms of the present.

That is not the focus of Dr. Kamil Asad's work. His approach, as he would be the first to own, is rather episodic; but, out of a kaleidoscope of incidents and approaches, he tries to portray something of the nature of the Muslim legacy in Sri Lanka and to paint this portrait from the viewpoint of one of its immediate inheritors. The results may well surprise the uninitiated. If Dr. Kamil Asad is right, the Muslims have been an influential group in the island for many centuries, long respected not only for their commercial prowess but also for their intellectual contacts and linguistic gifts.

None the less, it is in all probability their status as an ethnic minority which will attract most attention to this work. While Muslims by the modern period had few claims to "racial" distinctiveness, their religious difference still extended to various social practices which marked them out from their fellow subjects, and such differences often played a key role in determining their fate. To be treated as intermediaries, as they seem often to have been, allowed them some opportunities, but it also condemned them to a role of watchfulness and, sometimes, trimming. If the Vicar of Bray, who survived in office whatever the political complexion of the Church, is an Anglo-Irish phenomenon, he has his counterpart among the Muslims of Sri Lanka. How far the role was adopted as a posture and in self-defence and how far as a vehicle for self-advancement is too broad a question, perhaps, to be worth consideration. But Dr. Kamil Asad's work shows that at various times many of the prospering communities in Sri Lanka seem to have tried to bend the

Muslims to their will. It is small wonder, then, if occasionally the bitten should try to bite back.

Whatever interest there is in this story for the student of ethnic rivalries, the more remarkable feature is the absence of that sense of communalism which influenced contemporary Muslim minorities elsewhere, particularly in India, and which, in our own day, has often taken on a particularly bitter and militant tone. The Muslims of Sri Lanka, by contrast, though aware of their own co-religionists in the wider world, seem always to have felt more comfortable seeking accommodation. Perhaps Dr. Kamil Asad is right to see their lack of numbers and dispersed settlement as an obstacle to any other attitude, but internal divisions within the Muslim community—a feature he recognizes and describes but is inclined to discount—may have had the most crucial part to play. It must be admitted, though, that our knowledge is limited. We know far more of the Muslim elites than we do of those who sought to eke out a living as village agriculturists. Dr. Kamil Asad has tried to search for new sources of evidence for his subject in oral histories, but these, too, alas, have their bias towards the rich and powerful.

This book may do something to redirect attention to the Sri Lankan Muslim legacy. If it excites an interest and encourages further research into the many areas which are here only touched upon, it will have served its purpose well.

Dr. Tom Barron
University of Edinburgh

PREFACE

The work on the Muslims of Sri Lanka has been done very little. Most of the famous historians in Sri Lanka were either Sinhalese or Tamils. These historians tend to write more about their community than the Muslims of Sri Lanka. The study of the Muslim community had been ignored. Therefore, it is essential to work on this community.

This work is the revised of the thesis which had been submitted in the university of Edinburgh.

This book is an attempt to present a detailed thematic account of the history of the Muslims of Sri Lanka, concentrating chiefly on the British period between 1796 and 1949. Use has been made of all the known primary materials currently available for this topic in both Sri Lanka and Britain. Special attention has been devoted to the fields of Muslims in Politics and Muslims in commerce in Sri Lanka during the British era.

In this book, in the first chapter, it sketches the arrival of the Muslims in Sri Lanka, outlines the relationship between and the Sinhalese kings and deals with fate of the Muslims in Portuguese and Dutch periods.

Then the author looks at Muslims involvement in the conquest of the Kandyan Kingdom and in the Kandyan rebellion. Then the author surveys the Colebrooke-Cameron reforms and the appointment of the Muslims by the British as Civil Servants and as Counsels. After this section the book emphasises on the Egyptian nationalist 'Arabi Pasha' and his exile in Sri Lanka.

The Fourth Chapter analyses the Communal outbreak of violence between the Muslims and the Sinhalese in 1915. The Fifth Chapter deals with Muslims in Politics; special attention is given to Muslim Membership in the Legislative and Municipal Councils on the Island. The Sixth Chapter deals with Muslims and the struggle for Independence.

The Seventh Chapter gives a brief outline of Muslims in Trade during the British Period. It deals with Gems and Coconut. The Final Chapter gives the Conclusion of the book.

The Muslim history in Sri Lanka shows that the Europeans conquered and ruled for nearly four hundred and fifty years. In Sri Lanka, Islam is already established, the decay of Western Civilisation, also apparently epic significance was a religious and political clashes had come with Islam through western colonialism and christianity. However, Islamic faith survived on the Island.

Dr. M.N.M. Kamil Asad

Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

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Perhaps never in the study of the history of the Muslims of Sri Lanka has so much been owed by so few to so many. My debt is to a very wide range of people scattered through two different countries: Sri Lanka and Britain. Alas, they are too many all to be mentioned by name.

My first and warmest thanks go to Dr. Tom Barron, under whose guidance this project was prepared, and whose help was unstinting. Without his valuable comments, corrections and suggestions, it would not have been possible for me to complete this work.

Secondly, I must thank the staff of the Library of the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya, the Public Library in Colombo and the Department of Archives in Colombo. In London, I must thank the staff of the Public Records Office, the School of Oriental and African Studies and the British Library. In Edinburgh my thanks go to the staff of the main Library of the University of Edinburgh. All of those people made every effort to eliminate the difficulties I faced during the course of my studies.

I am most grateful also to the Association of Commonwealth Universities for awarding me a Commonwealth Scholarship to undertake this project. The staff of the British Council in Edinburgh and in London were a great help to me during my stay in Britain. I must express my gratitude to the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya, for granting me leave of absence to enable me to complete this study.

Last, but by no means least, I should like to express my gratitude to Navrang Publishers in Delhi for Publishing my thesis.

Peradeniya Sri Lanka.

ABBREVIATIONS

1. A.R.D.P.I. The Administrative Report of the Director of Public Instruction.
2. C.A.R. Ceylon Administrative Report.
3. C.B.B. Ceylon Blue Book.
4. C.d. Command Papers.
5. C.G.B. Ceylon Green Book.
6. C.G.G. Ceylon Government Gazette.
7. C.H.J. Ceylon Historical Journal.
8. C.J. Chambers Journal.
9. C.J.H.S.S. Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies.
10. C.M.R. Ceylon Muslim Review.
11. C.O. Colonial Office Records at the Public Record Office, London (e.g. C.O. 54/4, Colonial Office List No. 54, Vol. 4)
12. C.S.P. Ceylon Sessional Papers.
13. E.B. Encyclopaedia Britannica.
14. E.I.¹. The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. I.
15. E.I.². The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. II.
16. I.C. Islamic Culture.
17. J.A.S. The Journal of Asian Studies.
18. J.D.B.U. Journal of Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon.
19. J.I.C.H. The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History.
20. J.R.A.S. (C.B.) The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch).
21. L.E.C. The Legislative Enactments of Ceylon.
22. M.s. Manuscript.
23. N.L.R. New Law Report.
24. S.L.A.R. Sri Lanka Administrative Report
25. S.L.N.A. Sri Lanka National Archives.
26. S.L.G.G. Sri Lanka Government Gazette.
27. S.O.A.S. School of Oriental and African Studies.
28. U.M.M. University Muslim Majlis.
29. U.C.R. University of Ceylon Review.

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ISLAM COMES TO SRI LANKA - THE PRE-BRITISH ERA

The history of the Muslims of Sri Lanka is part of the history of Arab civilization in the East. Arabs, even before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, had spread far and wide in the East in the course of their trading activities. Prior to the sixth century A.D. the pre-Islamic Arabs dominated the trading of the Indian Ocean and participated in trade with Malaysia, Indonesia and China.¹

In the sixth century A.D. the peoples of the Arabian peninsular called Sri Lanka Jaziratul-Yaqt² (Island of Rubies), *Serendib* and *Singladib*³. Later, they called it Ceilan⁴ or Lanka. From the word Ceilan, the Portuguese derived the name *Ceilao* and the Dutch.

The Commercial relationship between Arabian and East had extended as far as Chix long before the birth of Islam with the advent of Islam. From the middle of the sixth century A.D. and the subsequent expansion of Muslim empire and Arab commercial activities in the Indian ocean affected gradually the people of South India and Sri Lanka. The Arab traders married the local women⁵, when they settled down in Sri Lanka - in areas like Beruwela, Galle, Colombo, Puttalam and Mannar.

One of the famous historian Nadvi Sulaiman confirms that there were large number of Muslim settlements in South India, long before the Muslims conquest of North India.⁶

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1. Sulaiman, Nadvi, Arab Navigation (Delhi 1942) pp. 42-46.
 2. Ahmad, Nafi "The Arabs' Knowledge of Ceylon" I.C. No. 47, Lahore 1940, p. 221.
 3. Ibn Shahryar, *Ajaibal-Hind* (Marvels of India) (ed. P.A. Van Der Lith, Leiden, 1883-86) p. 179.
 4. Sachau, C. *Alberuni's India*, (New Delhi 1964) p. 209. derived the name *Si'lon* and the British their name of Ceylon. In 1972, the country became known internationally by the name chosen by its government, Sri Lanka.
 5. Gortein, S.D., *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden, 1966), P. 335.
 6. Sulaiman, Nadvi, "Muslim Colonies in India before the Muslim Conquest" I.C. Vol. VIII, Hyderabad, 1930, p.95.

Further evidence for this is found in an ancient document held by a Muslim family of Beruwala. There it is said that in the 22nd year of Hijra (which corresponds to 643-644 A.D.) a fleet of four vessels conveying three Sultans left Yemen in the time of the second Caliph, Omar Kathab. The three distinguished pioneers were Badi-Ud-Din, Salaha-Ud-Din and Muhammad. The first named is supposed to have landed at Cannore in South India. Salaha-Ud-Din is also said to have made for the Indian coast, arriving at a place named Periya Pattinam, while his son, Shams-Ud-Din, cast his anchor at Mannar, in the north-west coast of Sri Lanka. The fourth vessel, which conveyed Muhammad and his son Salahu-Ud-Din, sailed further south and landed at Beruwala, where they are said to have settled.⁷ Today there are a few Moor families in Sri Lanka who trace their ancestry back to these migrants. If the account is accurate, it suggests that Beruwala is one of the oldest Muslim settlements in the country.

Other examples are known to support the view that Muslim settlements existed in Sri Lanka during the first century of Islam. There is a popular legend that the King of Sri Lanka sent to Hajjaj-ibn-Yusuf, the Viceroy of Iraq, some local Muslim women whose fathers had been merchants but who had died in the island. The ships conveying the women were supposedly attacked by some pirates near the seaport of Al-Daeybal (near Karachi in Pakistan). One of the captured women of the tribe of Banu Yerba is said to have cried, "Oh! Hajjaj! Come to my help." When this news reached the Viceroy, he sent a message to Raj Dahir, the ruler of Sind, demanding the immediate release of the captives. Since the ruler did not respond to the request, there commenced a series of raids against the kingdom of Sind in 715 A.D.⁸

There has long been a dispute about the precise date of the arrival of Muslims in Sri Lanka and of the start of their settlements. Here, historians have relied upon what they saw as the treasured traditions of the community. According to one British writer of the early nineteenth century, Sir Alexander Johnstone, the first Muslim settlement in Sri Lanka was started in the early part of the eighth century A.D.⁹ The settlers were supposedly descendants of the Hashemite clan, who had left Arabia in the seventh century, on account of the persecution of the Omayyad dynasty. When

7. Vansandeen, *Sonhar* (Colombo, 1926), p.118.

8. Ms. no. 77. *Tabaqat-i-Akbar Shahi* (Persian) Tabaqah, IX, fol. 641a. History of the Sultan of Multan from its first conquest by the Muslims under Muhammad Qasim during the Governorship of Arabs Hajjaj-b-Yusuf (University of Edinburgh, Main Library). See also Hitti, P.K., *History of Arabs* (Lond., 1937) p. 210.

9. Sir Alexander Johnstone to Secretary of State, 3 Feb., 1827, *J.R.A.S.* (GB. & I). vol. I, 1827, p. 537.

Caliph Abdul Melik bin Merwan was ruling Iraq, he is alleged to have persecuted and ill-treated the surviving.

Companions of the Prophet. In the course of his ruling of the Islamic empire, he is said to have put to death nearly 150,000 men, many on false charges.¹⁰ These Arabs, therefore, claimed to belong to one of the highest clans of Arabian society. The reason for the Caliph's hostility to the Prophet's family is said to be that the Ommeyade rulers feared rivals to the throne. With such disturbed conditions in the Arabian peninsula, some Muslims are thought to have left their motherland and come to Sri Lanka as refugees. There they began to settle down in the coastal areas such as Trincomalee, Jaffna, Puttalam, Colombo, Beruwala and Galle.¹¹

It is known that a religious teacher was sent to Sri Lanka by the Caliph of Baghdad at the request of Muslims of Sri Lanka.¹² This shows that a relationship had been established between Muslims in Sri Lanka and Baghdad when it was the capital of the Abbasid empire. Moreover, Khatib Baghdad refers to a scholar by the name of Abdur Rahman Bin Musa al-Sailani, who was present in Baghdad in 877 A.D.¹³

The patronage under the Abbasids in the ninth and tenth centuries to the Arab traders enable them to dominate the Indian ocean trade with the Persian Gulf as the main centre of commerce and trade. Their dominance in the trade was notably during the Polonnaruwa period.¹⁴

The Muslims in Sri Lanka gradually assumed significant positions in respect of the Island's trade and trade became a powerful factor in the Island's international standing.

As foreign trade grew in importance, the Arab Muslims appear to have settled down in even larger numbers in the coastal areas, from where they, in the course of time, moved on into the interior. Most of their settlements seem to have developed in the vicinity of lagoons.¹⁵

As the Arab settlements increased, the local Sinhalese rulers seem to have responded tolerantly and benevolently towards them and towards

10. Ameer Ali, S. *A Short History of the Saracens* (Lond., 1899) pp. 98-100.

11. Sir Alexander Johnstone to Secretary of State, 3 Feb., 1827, *J.R.A.A.* (GB. & I) vol. I, 1827, p. 537.

12. Imam, S.A. "Ceylon Arab Relations", *Moors' Islamic Cultural Home* (Colombo 1965) p. 13.

13. *Ibid.*

14. de Silva, K.M. *A History of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi, 1981) p. 75.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 72

the religion of Islam.¹⁶

During the period of the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. we also observe increasing references to Sri Lanka in Arab chronicles, especially in the works of those Arab seafarers who had journeyed to the island, either seeking opportunity or with the idea of visiting Adam's Peak. Sulaiman Tajir visited Sri Lanka in 850 A.D.; his impressions are incorporated in *Silsilat-ul-Tawarikh*. Abu Zaid-As-Sirafi visited Sri Lanka in 900 A.D. Al-Masudi came in 930 A.D. and gives a vivid description of the geography and of the manners and customs of the people of Sri Lanka in his famous work *Muraj-al-Dhahab*. Though most of the Arab geographers of this period, such as Al-Isthakri (950 A.D.), Ibn Hawqal (977 A.D.) and Al-Maqdisi (985 A.D.), did not visit Sri Lanka, they obtained valuable information about Sri Lanka from Arab travellers and sailors and this they incorporated into their works.¹⁷ The information supplied to Arab geographers of the period reveals a very large amount of Arab commercial activity in Sri Lanka.¹⁸ With this commerce came a corresponding growth in settlement and thus of the spread of Islam in Sri Lanka. The settlers seem to have been a conglomeration of Persians, Arabs and Abyssinians, and they brought both Islam and the Arabic language.¹⁹ The religion of Islam and the Arabic language were doubtless the factors that distinguished them and made them a distinct cultural entity once a generation or two had passed.

We find from the notices of the Arab travellers and writers of the ninth and tenth centuries that Arabic was then spoken in Sind.²⁰ We may assume, therefore, that the Muslims of Sri Lanka, too, at that time, who were also of Arab origin, must have spoken Arabic, and this would have greatly helped them in their dealings with the wider Muslim world. This would certainly be true of Baghdad, with which they seem to have had some cultural contacts during this period.

There is a local tradition that a teacher was sent by the Caliph of Baghdad to Sri Lanka. The teacher is said to have died in Sri Lanka in 957 A.D. The Caliph then supposedly sent a stone to the island, inscribed in Arabic, giving details about the teacher's life and this was placed on his grave in a cemetery which belonged to the Muslim community of Colombo. Sir Alexander Johnstone claims that the cemetery was later abandoned and

16. Imam, S.A., "Ceylon Arab Relations", *Moor's Islamic Cultural Home* (Colombo 1965) pp. 13-14.
17. S.M.H. Nainar, *Arab Geographers Knowledge of South India* (Madras, 1942), p. 221.
18. Ahmad, Nafis, "The Arabs' Knowledge of Ceylon", *I.C.*, no. 19, 1940, p. 221.
19. Yusuf, S.M., "Ceylon and Arab Trade", *History of Ceylon* (Colombo, 1960), p. 709.
20. Mujib. M., *The Indian Muslims* (Lond., 1967), p. 168.

that the stone was taken away by an official and placed at the entrance to his house as a stepping-stone. He says he learned this from Government officials. He was able to make an ink impression of the Arabic script and to send this to England. The Arabic was deciphered and a translation, which Johnstone published, was made by Sir Samuel Lee, Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge.²¹

As a result of increasing contacts, commercial and cultural, with the Muslims of Malabar, a new element, a South Indian one, was added to the composition of the Muslim (Arab) society of Sri Lanka.²² It then lost its exclusively Arab character.

Today in Sri Lanka, the Moors include so-called "Coast Moors" and "Ceylon Moors". It seems likely that the Coast Moors came originally from South India, during the early period of British rule. In Sri Lanka "Coast Moors" are called *Sammekeran* or non-resident population, implying that they are based in India.²³ *Sammekera* is believed generally to derive from the Malay word *Champana* which means boat.²⁴ Many Muslims came from South India over the centuries to engage in trade and no doubt many did settle down in the island. But others were merely temporary residents, travelling periodically from South India to Sri Lanka for the purpose of trade.

The "Sri Lankan Moors" are regarded as the much longer settled and so now permanent residents. Even today the Sri Lanka state uses the term "Sri Lankan Moor". Yet there are those who claim that both these groups must have had some ancestors who originally came from Arabia.²⁵

One of the important factors which contributed towards the growth of a harmonious relationship between natives and Muslim settlers was that Islam did not come to Sri Lanka as a conquering or proselytising force in the manner of its arrival in North India. Instead, Muslims, as traders, went about their business peacefully, seeking cordial relations with the islanders and seeking the favour and patronage of their court.

1. The Muslim Relationship with the Sinhalese Kings

As the Muslims in Sri Lanka remained primarily traders, they

21. Sir Alexander Johnstone to Secretary of State, 3 Feb., 1927, *J.R.A.S.* (GB & I), vol. I, 1827, p. 537.
22. de Silva, K.M., *A History of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi, 1981), p. 91.
23. Turner, L.J.B., *Report on the Census of Ceylon*, 1911 (Colombo, 1912), p. 232.
24. Sinnathamby, J.R., *Ceylon in Ptolemy's Geography* (Colombo, 1968), p. 60.
25. Abdul Azeez, I.L.M., *Ethnology of the 'Moors' of Ceylon* (Colombo, 1907), pp. 35-36-47.

continued to co-exist peacefully with the local peasantry. With the increase in the importance of foreign trade, however, Muslim settlements on the coast and even inland increased. With the Muslim increased trade activity, there came also a new development. Arab traders became, on occasions, advisers to the Sinhalese kings on foreign trade.

During the thirteenth century A.D., when Cairo was under the Mamuluke dynasty, a mission was despatched by Bhavanekabahu I of Yappahu (1272-1284 A.D.) to the Sultan of Egypt.²⁶ This mission was headed by "His Excellency, Al-Haj, Abu 'Uthman". He was described as a "Prince of Ceylon"; the Ambassador carried a letter from his master, which was wrapped in stuff made, it was said, from the bark of a palm, and the letter was contained in a gold box. The letter read:

Ceylon is Egypt and Egypt is Ceylon. I desire that an Egyptian Ambassador accompany mine on his return and that another be sent to reside in the town of Aden. I am possessed of prestigious vessels, elephants, muslin and other stuffs, brazil wood, cinnamon and other objects of commerce, which are brought to you by the banian merchants. My kingdom produces trees, the wood of which is fit for making spears. If the Sultan asks me for twenty vessels yearly, I shall be in a position to supply them. Further, the merchants of his dominions can with all freedom come to trade in my kingdom. I have received an Ambassador of the Prince of Yemen, who has come on behalf of his master to make me proposals of alliance. But I have sent him away through my affection for the Sultan. I possess twenty-seven castles of which the treasuries are filled with precious stones of all kinds. The pearl fisheries are part of my dominions and all that is taken there belongs to me.

This suggests that the main reason for the king to send an Ambassador to Egypt was to try to edge out the Indian middlemen and enter into direct trade with Egypt and West Asia. The use of a Muslim Ambassador for a mission to a Muslim court needs no further explanation; but the description of him as a "Prince" does suggest a surprising degree of eminence for a member of a recent immigrant community.

Many other, if less exalted, posts were held by Muslims in Sri Lanka. By the seventeenth century A.D. some Muslims of Sri Lanka had apparently come to be regarded as trustworthy, reliable and loyal servants to the

26. Codrington, H.W., "A Sinhalese Embassy to Egypt", J.R.A.S. (Ceylon), vol. XXVIII, no. 72, 1919, pp. 82-85.

Kandyan Kings.²⁷ They had become specialists in one important sphere as servants of the Crown, namely the Royal betge or department of King's physician, which functioned under the betge Mohandiram nilame. This was held by successive generations of a highly respected Muslim family. Their family name was Rajapaksa Waidyillake Gopala. This name, which owes nothing to Islam, is an indication of the extent to which either the religion or the family had been Ceylonised. A grant of 1747 shows that the King gifted land in the fertile districts of *Siduruvana* (an area situated in the Kandyan Province) and of *Udunavar* (also in the Kandyan Province) to Gopala Mudaliyar, a loyal and faithful physician to the King. In 1786, Buvalikuda Vedaralage Abu Bakr Pulla, who was physician in the King's betge, attended on the favourite secondary wife of King Rajadhirajasimha (1782-98 A.D.) and he was reputedly rewarded for his services with land.

Muslims were also appointed for service in the *Ulpange* or Royal Bath House. There were some 500 families who held land in return for such services. This was an elaborate organisation, and it is not known in what capacity they were employed. It could be that they were given the privilege of washing His Majesty's feet, which was an honor bestowed only on very privileged citizens, or Muslims may have been more remotely associated with the *Ulpange* as suppliers of fire-wood to heat the bath. They were also employed in the Palace in the *Multange* or supervision of the Royal kitchen.

2. The Muslims under the Portuguese

The history of Sri Lanka after the Portuguese conquest of the island owes much to records kept by the Portuguese themselves. As a result, a bias appears in the evidence against the Muslims, who were trade rivals and religious enemies of the Portuguese.²⁸

When the first Portuguese Captain, Pedro-lopes desousa (1594) arrived on the island, he notified his presence to Dharmapala (1551-97), King of Kotte. Eventually a mission was sent to the Sinhalese King, asking for permission to erect a fortress in Colombo. The King informed the Portuguese authorities in Colombo that he had to consult his councillors. The chronicles claim that the Muslims of Sri Lanka then advised the councillors not to allow the Portuguese to erect their fortress more recent historians

27. Lawrie, A.C., *A Gazetteer of the Central Provinces of Ceylon*, vol I (Colombo, 1886), p. 934.

28. Queiroz, Fernao de, the chronicler par excellence of the 16th and 17th century history of Sri Lanka, calls the Muslim "the enemies of the human race" on no fewer than three occasions. See his *Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, vol. II, trans. Perera, S.G. (Colombo, 1930), pp.530, 1128, 1148.

have suggested that, if they did so, there were sound reasons for the Muslims to do this. The Muslims had used only storehouses or "Bangasalas" in Colombo. A fortress, which was an armed stronghold of the King of Portugal, would be a positive threat to their established trade dealings in the island. The Muslims of Sri Lanka must also have been aware that the Portuguese had destroyed Muslim trade on the Coromandel Coast of India. They obviously feared that the Portuguese might do the same in Sri Lanka.

Yet, Bhuvaneka Bahu VII (1521-51), the King of Kotte, granted permission to build this Fort. At this time, he and his brother Mayadunne (1521-81), King of Sitavaka, were engaged in a fierce struggle for the throne of Kotte. On the pretext of helping Bhuvaneka Bahu VII, the Portuguese succeeded in establishing their authority on the island.

The Portuguese in Sri Lanka treated the Muslims as their enemies because of deep-rooted hostility between Portuguese and Muslims elsewhere. Portuguese Roman Catholicism had long been at odds with Islam since Muslims had captured Spain and Portugal from their base in Morocco and had met Charlemagne on the Plains of France. Both were also long standing trade rivals.

The Portuguese in Sri Lanka were subsequently attacked by the forces of Pachchi Marikar, a Malabar Muslim, who led a band of warriors. In the ensuing conflict, Pachchi Marikar was killed in Kotte. By the middle of the 1520s, however, the situation changed radically. Bhuvaneka Bahu VII (1521-51) of Kotte, allied with the Portuguese, was persuaded to expel Muslims from his kingdom. However, his brother, Mayadunne of Sitawaka, accepted the Muslims into his domains, and they served him as soldiers in his campaign against the Portuguese and also as diplomatic agents who brought him men and material from the Raja of Calicut. Yet even Mayadunne himself surrendered some Malabar Muslim allies to the Portuguese when he found it opportune.

In 1551 on the death of the King of Kotte, the Portuguese Viceroy, de Noronha, invaded Sri Lanka with a large army and captured Kotte. In 1565, he abandoned Kotte and concentrated on Colombo. In order to build a stronger fort in Colombo (On the site where the present breakwater begins), the Portuguese authorities destroyed a mosque there. On the following day the Portuguese burnt down the Grand Mosque of Colombo.²⁹

The Portuguese authorities tolerated the Muslims in Sri Lanka until

29. Mohamad, Nuhman, *History of Colombo Grand Mosque* (Colombo, 1959), pp.2-3.

1640. One reason for this may have been that if the Muslims of Sri Lanka had been expelled from the Maritime Provinces of the country, they would move to Kandy and strengthened the Kandyan King, Vimala Dharmasuriya I (1591-1604) in his fight against the Portuguese.

But restrictions were placed on Muslims. One of these, on their residence, resulted in the gradual establishment of new Muslim trading communities along the coast, which soon spread into the interior of the island. The influx of coastal Muslims into the hinterland was welcomed by the Kandyan Kings, perhaps because the kingdom was then denuded of manpower after the earlier wars and invasions. Hitherto Muslims had come to Kandy only in search of merchandise, which they carried away to the coast and beyond; but now, in the face of Portuguese oppression, they came both as refugees and as invitees of the kings of Kandy. There is evidence that at least 4,000 Muslims were well received by King Senarat (1604-35) and some were accommodated in fertile lands around Batticaloa, which was not then occupied by the Portuguese.

Muslims fared no better when the Dutch sought to challenge Portuguese power over the coastal regions. In this struggle between the Portuguese and the Dutch, the Muslims, along with other coastal dwellers, were caught in the crossfire. They had to suffer at the hands of one side or the other, whenever they were suspected of disloyalty. On one occasion a fearful massacre of the Muslims of Matara was carried out in 1643 on the orders of the Portuguese captain Antonio de Amral. This resulted in the killing of 200 to 300 men, and women and young children were sent into slavery in Colombo. During the same period, a second massacre occurred amongst the Muslims of Alutgama.³⁰

After this instance, the Muslims actively sought peace with the Portuguese. They were then allowed to continue to trade with the Kandyan Kingdom; they sold goods such as salt, clothing, household items and crockery, and bought in exchange spices, such as cloves, nutmeg, pepper and cardamoms, which they traded with the Portuguese.

The so-called "Thavalam" or Pack Bull trade was another field controlled by the Muslims.³¹ While the Portuguese ruled in Sri Lanka, Kalpitya was the Muslims principal seaport in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lanka Muslims smuggled through Kalpitya arms and ammunition from South India

30. Queiroz, Fernao de, *Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, vol. II, trans. Perera, S.G. (Colombo, 1930), pp. 864-865 and 896.

31. Gunawardena, K.W., "Some Notes on the History of the Muslims in Ceylon Before the British Occupation", *U.M.M.*, vol. IX, 1959-60. Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, p. 90.

for the Kandyan Kings. But the port was carefully watched by Portuguese officials.³² Freedom of worship, too, was restricted in Portuguese Sri Lanka, Muslims not being allowed to worship in public at their mosques. But in the villages they had their own quazi or judge and were allowed to practice Muslim personal laws.³³

During the 150 years of their presence in the island, the Portuguese implemented policies towards the Muslims which were very unpopular. The Muslims in Sri Lanka had maintained a peaceful relationship with the native population and developed their trade before the arrival of the Portuguese. After their arrival, the Portuguese destroyed much of this trade. In Sri Lanka, the Portuguese found some low country Sinhalese and low caste Tamils open to conversion to the Catholic religion, but the Muslims were not. The Portuguese also faced the Malabar Muslims who came to help the Sinhalese Kings. Later, to some extent they tolerated the Muslims, but the Muslims' presence in Sri Lanka was always suspect and they were often harassed. The Portuguese rule over the Muslims in Sri Lanka was marked, therefore, by discrimination and repression.

3. The Muslims under the Dutch

The Dutch sought to control Sri Lanka primarily for trade. They were helped in this when the Kandyan King invited the Dutch to drive away the Portuguese from Sri Lanka.³⁴ The Dutch landed in Batticaloa in 1602. In 1639 they captured Tricomalee; Negombo was captured in 1640; and in the same year the Portuguese sustained their final defeat in the Maritime Provinces of Sri Lanka. Soon afterwards, King Raja Simha II (1628-83) of Kandy sent a Muslim agent, Chipatin, named Yusuf Lebbe, to negotiate with the Dutch over access to the cinnamon and spice trade in the Maritime Provinces of the island.

But the Dutch, too, often treated the Muslims as their enemies. They were conscious that their faith and that of the Muslims differed fundamentally. The Dutch were Calvinists, stern believers in a rigorous Christianity; the Muslims consistently rejected opportunities offered them for conversion. The Muslims were also seen as obstacles to Dutch trade; therefore the Dutch, too, were aggressive towards the Muslims of Sri Lanka and described them as "Pirates" and as "Peddlers". All their devices to crush Muslim

32. Thawleeq, M.M., *The Moorish Connection* (Colombo, 1976), p. 169.

33. Queiroz, Fernao de, *Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, vol. II, trans. Perera, S.G. (Colombo, 1930), pp. 744-45.

34. de Silva, K.M., *A History of Sri Lanka* (Delhi, 1981), p. 120-21.

trade, however, failed. The Sinhalese kings continued to trade with the Muslims.

It is clear that the relationship between the Sinhala kings and some Muslim families during this period was a cordial one. This was despite attempts by the Dutch to create rifts between them. In one case, the Dutch wrote to the Kandyan King that the Moghuls, Muslim rulers, who were dominant in North India, were threatening to come to Ramesvaram (in South India) and thence to Sri Lanka, and that the Muslim traders of the coast would betray the country to their co-religionists. However, this rumor was not believed, and the Sinhala-Muslim accord remained.

Dutch restrictions on Muslim trading practices, however, grew. In 1670 a law was passed ordering the Muslims to quit Colombo and take up residence in the region between Alutgama and Galle. They were also subjected to the enforcement of 'Uliyam or compulsory labour for a stipulated number of days a year. In 1743, the Dutch enacted a law making the confiscation of lands the penalty for evasion of 'Uliyam or compulsory labour. Furthermore, the head of each Muslim family was required to pay a special poll-tax of six dollars.³⁵ The tax was, however, removed in Matara and Hambantota districts in 1708, on the recommendation of Captain Jan Schreucder. Muslims had been obliged in former times to work at Galle and Matara in various Government services. In lieu of such duty, they were now required to pay six dollars (Rs. 450) annually to the Government.

But, in general, the initial hostility to Muslims had waned by the beginning of the eighteenth century. An example of this was the attempt by Governor Falck (1765-85) to discover the laws and customs of the Muslim community in the island. He even formulated a code for them.³⁶ And in 1784, the Muslims were given a concession with regard to *Uliyam* or compulsory labour. Those who did not want to labour could pay a poll-tax in lieu of this service.

Although the Muslims were still trading in Sri Lanka, the Dutch were prepared to tolerate them for two reasons. Firstly, they were seen as fellow outsiders to Sri Lanka, potential allies, and, secondly, the Dutch were primarily interested in developing trade as far as they could.

There were moments when Dutch policy towards the Muslims in Sri

35. Gunawardena, K.W., "Some Notes on the History of the Muslims in Ceylon Before the British Occupation", *U.M.M.* vol. IX, 1959-60, p. 89.

36. S.L.N.A., no. 6/469, Governor General of Batavia to Falck, 20 Feb., 1776.

Lanka was not less extreme than the Portuguese in its open persecution, and the Dutch were more methodical in their operations. Also, unlike the Portuguese, the Dutch were highly skilled in commerce. Hence, their policy of ousting the Muslims from key commercial positions was more ruthless and uncompromising.

When the Dutch stepped into the shoes of the Portuguese as masters of the Maritime Provinces of the island in 1658, the outlook for the Muslims on the coast seemed as bleak as ever. To the Dutch Trading Company, economic considerations superseded everything else.

Yet, by the end of the Dutch rule, the Muslim community in Sri Lanka had managed to gain for itself a special position with the Company, despite the original hostility towards them. The Dutch had, it is true, taken more and more steps to expel them from their towns, which meant that more and more Muslims had taken refuge in the Kandyan kingdom. But these Muslims prepared to obey the strict law of the Dutch Company were able to gain some benefits in religious liberty and trade.

2

MUSLIMS IN THE EARLY YEARS OF BRITISH RULE

1. British Policy and the Muslims in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

There are only four major occasions when Muslims feature in a major way in the only British records. The first such occasion occurred during the secret mission to Sri Lanka of John Pybus. The British East India Company had dispatched this mission from Madras in 1762, conceiving of it purely as an intelligence-gathering project, designed to enable them to study, at close quarters, the political problems which they were likely to encounter should they attempt to intervene in the island. So, although the Kandyans hoped otherwise, John Pybus was not in a position to offer to negotiate any substantial agreement on the part of the British government with regard to their future plans for the island. He was an intelligence agent, not a diplomat. Thus for Kandy the mission was destined, politically, to achieve nothing.¹

On May 5th, 1762, John Pybus reached Tricomalee and moved on to a village called Muttur.² This village was inhabited by Muslims, and he was welcomed there by a Muslim Hadjee.³ Pybus then continued his journey towards Kandy.⁴ On the third night of his journey to Kandy, Pybus stopped at a village called Pangurana, situated at a distance of twenty-one miles from Tricomalee. Pybus reported that this village too was inhabited by Muslims and he took an interest in the villagers' appearance and customs. They, like other Kandyans, practised animal husbandry and agriculture, and were mainly peasants. He also remarks that they wore for their personal attire a simple cotton cloth.⁵ That Pybus on his journey should have been twice put up at a Muslim village may suggest that it was thought that, as a known

1. de Silva, C.R., *Ceylon Under the British Occupation*, vol. 1 (Colombo, 1953), p.6.
2. A village near Batticaloa in the Eastern part of the island.
3. Title given to an influential member of the Muslim community.
4. Raven-Hart, R., *The Pybus Embassy to Kandy, 1762* (Colombo, 1958), p. 3.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

intelligence agent, he would gain Jess useful information there than in a Sinhalese village. But, whatever the reason for his residence, his observations are of interest to historians, as they prove that Muslims had settled and established themselves within Kandyan territory in both Eastern and Central Sri Lanka well before the arrival of the British.

When Pybus arrived at Gannoruwa, which is located close to the capital of Kandy, an official representative of the Kandyan king met him. This, it transpired, was Udman Lebbe, son of Maulana Mohandiram, a Muslim.

Throughout the mission, this man frequently accompanied the British party.⁶ The ambition of the King of Kandy, Kirti Sri Rajasimha (1742-82), in entertaining this mission, was to enlist the aid of the British in order to drive the Dutch out his native land.⁷ Interestingly, he seems to have felt that a Muslim representative might aid him greatly in this matter. It is known that, despite ultimately the negative result of this mission, the King showered Udman Lebbe with gifts of gold.⁸

Why the Kandyan King should have used a Muslim for this mission, rather than a Sinhalese, is open to argument. Perhaps, as traders, Muslims, who were frequently on the move, especially between India and Sri Lanka, were considered useful intermediaries. Perhaps their value lay in their linguistic ability to communicate with the British.⁹ But at least it seems clear that by the middle of the eighteenth century some Muslims must have been considered very loyal supporters of the Kandyan king before one could have been selected for such an important foreign assignment.

The second contact between Muslims and the British was not until February 1796. When the British began their occupation of Colombo, some Sri Lankan Muslims joined forces with the Dutch against them. The British commander, Colonel James Steward, noted upon entering Colombo that there were 260 Muslims in the Colombo artillery fighting alongside the Dutch, though half of them had by then deserted. The reason for their desertion, it may be supposed, is that they were merely mercenaries in the pay of the Dutch. Thus, with the capture of Colombo by the British imminent, a switch of loyalties might have seemed expedient.

6. Raven-Hart, R., *The Pybus Embassy to Kandy, 1762* (Colombo, 1958), p. 50.

7. The desire of the Kandyan King was to drive the Dutch out of his native land because he was unhappy with the Dutch handling the island's cinnamon trade. See de Silva, K.M., *A History of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi, 1981), pp. 138-39.

8. S.L.N.A., No. 1/200 minutes of the Dutch Political Council, Colombo, 10 May, 1762.

9. Cordiner, James, *A Description of Ceylon*, vol. 1 (Lond., 1807), p. 139.

A third official contact between the Muslims and the British followed soon after. A British officer, Captain Martin of Madras, was ordered to raise two separate battalions in Sri Lanka: the first was intended for the purpose of internal defence against the threat of attack from the Kandyan kingdom, and the second for general services. In the latter battalion he included some five hundred locally-raised Muslim troops. It is also clear that once these Muslims had given their loyalty to the British, the British trusted them.

Muslims were also the subject of an official complaint by the British to Kandy during the governorship of Frederick North (1798-1805). An incident took place which was of some lasting significance to the Muslims of Sri Lanka. In March or April of 1802, some Muslim merchants were returning from a trading expedition to the Kandyan province with a consignment of areca-nuts when they were stopped at the Puttalam Bazaar. Their arrest was on the orders of the first Adigar, ¹⁰ Pilimatalauve, a man who claimed royal Kandyan descent. Their entire consignment of areca-nuts was confiscated and later sold to some traders from Colombo.¹¹ Whilst the Muslims were permitted to leave with only their cattle.¹² This incident was reported to Governor North, who, in September of the same year, sent a curt personal letter to the King inviting him to comment on the circumstances.¹³ On 4th October, the *Adigar* sent a note to the Governor, stating that he had those responsible for the confiscation questioned. Their defence was that they had been renting the areca-nut farms of the Disavanies¹⁴ at the time the incident took place. In other words, they were arguing that the Muslim traffic was illegal and was an infringement of their monopoly as renters. The Adigar declared, however, that the Muslim arrests had taken place before the farms had been rented, and he therefore promised that restitution would be made to the parties concerned, if and when they should apply for it. That North should have written in strong terms to the King of Kandy, demanding an explanation for what was in fact a very minor incident, suggests that the British wished to make clear that they were treating the Muslims as their citizens. North probably planned to use the incident as an excuse for action against the Kandyan kingdom at some time in the future. He in fact later attempted, both in 1803 and 1805, to capture the Kandyan kingdom, and ultimately he participated in a disastrous war. It was left to Sir Thomas Maitland to end hostilities in 1805 and to try to secure a treaty with the

10. Adigar means chief officer of state in the Kandyan kingdom.

11. Cordiner, James, *A Description of Ceylon*, vol. II (Lond., 1807), p. 165.

12. C.O. 54/7, North to Hobart, 31 July, 1802.

13. C.O. 54/6, North to Hobart, 4 Sept., 1802.

Test

14. Disavanies means governors of a province in the Kandyan kingdom.

Kandyan king. During his governorship of Sri Lanka, *North* clearly treated the Muslim community tolerantly. There were good reasons for this: the Muslims constituted a community potentially loyal to the British government.¹⁵ They were also active in the promotion of commerce, undertaking trading enterprises both inside and outside the country. In their capacity as traders, they were able not only to help improve the country's economy but, owing to their links with the Kandyan community, it was hoped that they could provide assistance in other ways. Muslims were also used by the British in eliciting military data for them. The British kept records which reveal that in 1810 there were 400 Malabari, 250 Muslims and 200 Malay recruits in the Kandyan army.

In view of such factors, *North* was sympathetic in his handling of the Muslim community, increasing, for example, their opportunities to lease rented property. *North* in addition recruited more Muslims into the army. He also refused to levy the earlier poll-tax upon the Muslim community, regarding this former practice of the Dutch government as a discriminatory policy, since it was not applied to other commercial groups in Sri Lanka.

But it was not until the recommendation of the Colebrooke-Cameron Commission¹⁶ that this system of uliyam or poll-tax was finally officially abolished, through Regulation 25 of the 28th June, 1830.¹⁷

2. The Conquest of the Kandyan Kingdom

Sir Thomas Maitland, who served as Governor in Sri Lanka from 1805 to 1811, failed, like his predecessor, *North*, to win any political agreement with the Kandyan kingdom. He was succeeded by Sir Robert Brownrigg, who was Governor from 1812 to 1820. During this period, some Kandyan chiefs, between whom differences had arisen, and who were bent on the overthrow of the king of Kandy, welcomed the idea of British intervention in the Kandyan kingdom. A period of confrontation between the British and the Kandyans developed, and during this time some Muslims of the Kandyan kingdom gave their tacit support to the British. When the

15. By contrast, the Malay soldiers were not loyal to the British, and they fought against the British in the Kandyan war. The Malay Muslims originated mainly from the island of Java or elsewhere in Indonesia. For further details, see, Hussainmiya, B.A., *ORANG REGIMENT: "The Regiment People", A Study of the Malays of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, 1827-1873*. (Unpublished Ph.D. University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya, 1984), pp. 2-3.

16. The Colebrooke-Cameron Commission Reforms will be discussed later in this chapter.

17. C.O. 50/12, Secretary of State to the Governor, 28 June, 1830. The Malay soldiers had been exempted from the poll-tax because of their loyalty to the Dutch. S.L.N.A., No. 1/68, Minutes of the Dutch Political Council, 30 Sept., 1743.

Kandyan king was preparing himself for war against the British in 1813, a Muslim village, Vellassa, was razed to the ground by the Sinhalese as a punishment for its failure to obey the call to military service. The Muslims were said to have refused to fight on behalf of the king because they were principally traders with no military training.¹⁸

But it may be that they also realized that the overthrow of the king was inevitable as the British troops were well equipped with the latest military weapons.¹⁹ However, Sir Robert Brownrigg was careful not to miss his opportunity to occupy the kingdom. On his orders, British troops advanced on the city of Kandy on the 10th January, 1815, and, within forty days, captured it. They found the city empty; not a living creature was to be seen apart from a few pariah dogs.

On 18th February, 1815 the independent Sinhalese kingdom was formally ceded to the British and the king deposed. The king was finally captured by the British on 2nd March, 1815. The famous Kandyan Convention was then signed at the Royal Palace.²⁰

With the signing of this convention, Kandyan sovereignty was transferred to the British Crown; but provisions were made carefully to preserve and safeguard the local political and religious institutions. Amongst the signatories therein are to be found the names of only the Sinhalese elite of Kandy. No Muslim name appears.²¹ Perhaps the Muslims were not sufficiently important to rank as signatories of Kandyan treaties, or perhaps they were overlooked in this document on account of their questionable loyalty during the Kandyan war. They may have engendered a general mistrust of Muslims amongst the Sinhalese community. But it may be significant too that a Kandyan king, who had used a Muslim envoy to negotiate with the British in order to drive the Dutch out his native land, now ignored Muslim intermediaries altogether. The British, too, clearly did not insist on including any Muslim in this document, although the Muslims were used by them two years later to put down the rebellion of 1817/1818.²²

Muslim trade was interrupted by the British conquest. The barter

18. C.O. 54/47, Brownrigg to Bathurst, 30 April, 1813. We note, however, that there were still other Muslims in the King's military service who fought alongside the Kandyan troops.

19. S.L.N.A., N.5/6 Brownrigg to Bathurst, Bm 1813.

20. de Silva, C.R., *Ceylon Under the British Occupation*, vol. I (Colombo, 1953), p. 100, and 164-66.

21. de Silva, G.P.S.H. (ed.). "The Kandyan Convention of 1815 - a Document 'Lost' and Found", *The Sri Lankan National Archives*, vol. I, no. I (Colombo, 1983), pp. 69-86.

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22. The first Kandyan Rebellion (1817-18) will be discussed in the following section.

trade between the maritime provinces of Sri Lanka and the Kandyan kingdom had been largely conducted by Muslims. The Kandyans bartered, for example, for dry grain, salt, areca-nuts, jaggery, salt fish and cloth from the maritime provinces, all through Muslim traders. This trade was not only adversely affected by the Kandyan war, but also, to a certain extent, by the first Kandyan rebellion of 1817-1818.

3. The First Kandyan Rebellion (1817-18)

The first Kandyan rebellion was led by a former bhikku,²³ who claimed to be the chosen king of Sri Lanka on the authority of the god Kataragama. Rebellion first broke out in Uva²⁴ in September 1817. It took the British government in Sri Lanka by surprise.²⁵ On 11th September, 1817, the Government Agent in Badulla,²⁶ Mr. Wilson, informed John D'Oyly, a British expert on Kandyan affairs, that a suspicious party had been seen in Uva, including a Malabari stranger and a company of eight priests. Mr. Wilson decided to have this party captured. He entrusted the mission to a certain Hadjee, who duly set off with a small group of fellow Muslims. Upon hearing that the party in question was in the Kandyan village of Kotervela with two hundred Vaddas, Hadjee and his men marched there. At the village of Inavalla, Hadjee captured a number of suspects and sent them to badulla. He then with his party attempted to make a further advance, but he was attacked by the rebels, captured and put to death.²⁷

During the rebellion, the British government made other uses of the loyalty of the Muslim community. They established their principal military post of communications in the Muslim village of Kotabova, situated between Batticaloa and Badulla, which proved to be of considerable service to them.²⁸ As for the Muslim communities of Uva and Vellassa, they supplied the commissariat with transport in the form of bullock carts, for the purpose of conveying military equipment to their stores from the country's maritime province.²⁹

All in all, the loyal support the British received from some Muslims, and especially the information they passed on regarding the Pretender, proved to be of major importance in enabling the rebellion to be put down.

23. A Suddhist monk or priest.

24. Uva province situated between central province and southern province of Sri Lanka.

25. de Silva, C.R., *Ceylon Under the British Occupation*, vol. I (Colombo, 1953), pp. 196-99.

26. The capital town of Uva province.

27. C.O. 54/66, Brownrigg to Bathurst, 7 Nov., 1817.

28. C.O. 54/56, Hardy to the Governor, 20 July, 1815.

29. *Ibid.*

The support of the Muslims in the Kandyan province was immediately rewarded. Section 52 of the proclamation of 21st November, 1818, issued by the Governor, required "the Moormen when living in villages where Kandyans also reside" to obey orders of the Kandyan chief or headman of the village "on pain of punishment by the Agent of Government for disobedience."³⁰ This in effect gave the Muslims an appeal to the British officials, whereas article eight of the Kandyan Convention of 2nd March, 1815 had put the power of punishment over non-Sinhalese exclusively in the hands of the Sinhalese chiefs.³¹

The proclamation of 21st November, 1818 also further guaranteed that religious toleration was to be exercised in respect of Muslims. Article sixteen of the proclamation stipulated that the protection of the government was guaranteed to the peaceable exercise by all persons of the religion which they respectively professed. The erection of places of worship, however, was prohibited without licence from the Governor.³² It is possible that before this proclamation permission to erect a place of worship was awarded by the chiefs of the Kandyan province.³³

The same proclamation also guaranteed a reduction in the grain tax for those regions which had remained loyal to the British during the rebellion; this was of particular benefit to Muslims from the districts of Ratnapura and Kegalla.³⁴

The Muslims were to benefit, also, from a government promise that full compensation would be made to every Muslim who suffered injury to person or property during the rebellion.³⁵

There was yet another development to arise out of Muslim support for the British during the rebellion. Out of what they claimed was resentment towards the Muslims for the part they had played, some Sinhalese chiefs in the Kandyan province resorted to taking certain goods, such as salt, from Muslim traders and refusing payment. As a consequence the Muslims complained to the Governor and asked to have a *Muhandiram*³⁶ appointed

30. C.G.G., 28 Nov., 1818, Sec. 52.

31. de Silva, G.P.S.H. (ed.). "The Kandyan Convention of 1815 - A Document 'Lost' and Found". *The Sri Lankan National Archives*, vol. I, no. 1 (Colombo, 1963), sec. 8.

32. C.G.G., 28 Nov., 1818, sec. 16.

33. de Silva, G.P.S.H. (ed.). "The Kandyan Convention of 1815 - A Document 'Lost' and Found". *The Sri Lankan National Archives*, vol. I, no. 1 (Colombo, 1963), sec. 5.

34. C.G.G., 28 Nov., 1818, sec. 19.

35. C.G.G., 7 March, 1818.

36. Chief revenue officer in the Kandyan province.

to protect them.

This appeal too could now be entertained as, on 30th September, 1810, in a document containing instructions to accompany the charter of justice which had been despatched from Downing Street, it was stated:

All members of the Landraads and other inferior courts, all justices of peace, sitting magistrates, all *Modeliars* and *Muhandirams* in the Cingalese part of the British territories, and all native headmen of a similar rank in the Malabar part shall be appointed by the Governor in Council under the Great Seal.³⁷

The Governor chose to use this authority to appoint the first Muslim *Muhandiram* with power over a Muslim community. This was Udman Lebbe Marikar Shiekh, Abdul Cader, who received his post on 10th June, 1818.³⁸

Later other such appointments were nominally opened up to any local candidate, rather than being the preserve of the Sinhalese or Tamil elite of the region. It was stipulated that any native sufficiently well-qualified for the post of *Muhandiram* or headman might be appointed.³⁹ Muslims were also now permitted other privileges. For example, they had the right for the first time to enter the business of revenue farming.

Under British rule, then, Muslims began to receive benefits and one Muslim was appointed to the office of *muhandiram*, an office which would have been denied him during the period of Dutch domination in Sri Lanka.

4. The Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms⁴⁰

The Muslims in Sri Lanka were to find their positions further affected by the Colebrooke-Cameron Commission. Colebrooke,⁴¹ the Chief Commissioner, arrived in Sri Lanka on 11th April, 1829 and left, with Cameron,⁴² the Legal Commissioner, on 14th February, 1831. These commissioners were sent to Sri Lanka to investigate why the expenditure of the island

37. C.O. 55/62, Liverpool to Maitland, 30 Sept., 1810. See 38.S.L.N.A., No. 13/12, Secretary of State's despatch No. 45 of 10 June, 1818.

38. S.L.N.A. No. 13/12, Secretary of State's despatch No. 45 of 10 June, 1818.

39. C.O. 54/89, Barnes to Bathurst, 20 Oct., 1825.

40. The Colebrooke-Cameron Papers consist of three reports.

41. Colebrooke served as a first Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery in 1803. In 1809, he was promoted to Captain in the army. He was the son of Colonel Paulet Welbone Colebrooke.

42. Cameron was a lawyer from London. His father was Charles Cameron who had been Governor of the Bahamas.

exceeded the revenue. In order to place the finances on a sound footing,⁴³ various recommendations were made by them. On 24th December, 1831, Colebrooke submitted a first report to the Rt. Hon. Viscount Goderich (Secretary of State). This dealt with proposals for the future administration of the government of Sri Lanka. The second report was submitted on 31st January, 1832 and concerned the revenues of Sri Lanka. The third (confidential) report was submitted on March 16th, 1832 and was on the compulsory services in Sri Lanka. These reports gave little attention to the cultural variety of the country, but the reforms proposed by Colebrooke and Cameron were still to be of some significance for the Muslim community. Indeed, Sri Lanka was, in consequence, to undergo a substantial change in its administrative and economic systems of importance for all.

Upon the arrival of Colebrooke and Cameron in Galle, on June 1829, a complaint was lodged with them by the men of the Muslim community. The Muslims asserted that in Galle they were on occasions obliged to work without wages, even without subsistence, such as was permitted criminals in prison, and that they were subject to corporal punishment and were often reduced to poverty and distress by their arbitrary removal from their chosen occupations.⁴⁴ Following their complaint, Colebrooke investigated and agreed that they were suffering from an "objectionable system". He supposed that their treatment derived from caste obligations, which had probably been devised by the Sinhalese kings in favour of the Sinhalese elite. In his report, he recommended that all such obligations be abolished.⁴⁵ Governor Horton, however, who held office from 1831-37, had earlier opted, on the contrary, to make use of such labour services for the purpose of a road construction project, which had been initiated by Sir Edward Barnes (Governor from 1824-31). The project was intended to like together all the major towns of the island.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, all systems of compulsory labour, or *Rajakariya*, were legally abolished on 3rd May, 1832.⁴⁷ This was particularly to benefit those Muslims of Sri Lanka whose principal occupation lay not in working the land but in trade and industrial ventures.

The abolition of compulsory labour was not, however, total; the Imperial government decided to make an exception with regard to the

43. Mendis, G.C., *Ceylon Under the British* (Colombo, 1946), pp. 35-36.

44. Mendis, G.C., *The Colebrooke-Cameron Papers*, vol. I 1. C.O. 54/145, Colebrooke to Secretary of State, 16 March, 1832.

45. C.O. 54/145, Colebrooke to Secretary of State, 16 March, 1832.

46. Mendis, G.C., *The Colebrooke-Cameron Papers*, vol. I (Oxford, 1956), pp. Ivi and Ivii.

47. C.O. 55/72, Secretary of State to Horton, 3 May, 1832.

services attached to the Temples and *Devala* land.⁴⁸ Accordingly, tenants of the latter were obliged to continue their customary services.⁴⁹ This exception concerned even Muslims who had been accommodated into the scheme of compulsory labour attaching to the Temples and Devalas. The Temple Land commissioners observed in 1859 and 1870 that Muslims yearly supplied a certain number of candles and gallons of oil for the Temples.⁵⁰

Another important recommendation in the *Colebrooke-Cameron* reforms was that the government of Sri Lanka should remove any discriminatory laws which hindered social reforms and development, and fettered the free activities of the people.⁵¹ This was supposedly the basis of regulation No.2 of 1832, by which the Muslims of Sri Lanka were permitted, for the first time, to own properties in the areas of Pettah and Fort. On 25th January 1833, a letter was sent from Downing Street to the Governor, Sir Robert Wilmot Horton, confirming the king's approval of the regulation whereby the restrictions which had been imposed on Moors and Malabarīs under Portuguese domination were to be removed.⁵² Once these restrictions were lifted, Muslims had the opportunity to indulge in a novel range of commercial activities.

Yet another recommendation made in the *Colebrooke-Cameron* reports was that posts in the lower grades of the Civil Service might be filled by local candidates,⁵³ and, further to this, that revenues should be collected through native receivers, who were generally to be the majoraāl and village heads who superintended the cultivation of the lands. Such public functionaries, who had earlier received small salaries, might be remunerated in future by the assignment of lands, called "accomodessans", which they were to hold free from taxes and services.⁵⁴ Muslims had held such posts in the 1800s; they were now to benefit in the p.44 from the implementation of these proposals.

5. Muslims and Civil Service Appointments:

The Imperial government, regarding Muslims as loyal, reliable and

48. Land attached to shrines.

49. C.O. 55/72, Secretary of State to Governor, 3 May, 1832, "Abolition of Compulsory Services".

50. Report of the Temple Commissioner for 1859, (Colombo, 1860), p.15; C.O. 57/51, *Report of the Services Tenure Commissioners* for 1870 (Colombo, 1870), p. 285.

51. C.O. 55/122, Colebrooke to Secretary of State, 31 Jan., 1832, "Assessment of the House".

52. S.L.N.A., No. 4/150, Despatch No. 48 of 25 Jan., 1833.

53. C.O. 54/122, Colebrooke to Secretary of State, 24 Dec., 1831, "Employment of Natives".

54. Table I.

trustworthy, now began to select them as cashiers, assistant cashiers and shroffs, particularly in the areas of Galle and Colombo. In these capacities, they were responsible for the collection of taxes from the farmers, which was an important source of income for the Imperial government. Muslim tenure of such jobs, which lent them some prestige, also often served to incur prejudice against them in the minds of Sinhalese.⁵⁵ Another new avenue of opportunity opened for those Muslims in Colombo who could speak Sinhalese, Tamil and English (or even Portuguese). Such men were often appointed after 1800 as interpreters in Colombo courts, on account of their multi-lingual abilities.⁵⁶

TABLE I
Muslim Appointments in Public Service Positions: Cashiers, Shroffs,
Translators and District Medical Officers.

NAMES	NATURE AND PLACES OF OCCUPATION.	DATE OF APPOINTMENT
1. Mr. M.S.O.A.L. Marikar.	Shroff, Matara Katchary.	28th Nov., 1838. ¹
2. Mr. S.L.M.O.L. Marikar.	Shroff, Gall Katchary.	1st July., 1848. ²
3. Mr. C.L. Soykoo Abdool	Assistant Cashier of the General Treasury of Colombo.	1st May, 1863. ³
4. Mr. C.L. Abdul Majeed.	Assistant Shroff of the General Treasury of Colombo.	1st May, 1877. ⁴
5. Mr. A.L.M. Wil Cassim.	Shroff, Galle Katchary.	1st Jan., 1848. ⁵
6. Mr.I.L.M.H. Mohamado	Shroff, Galle Katchary.	1st Nov., 1877. ⁶
7. Mr.U.L.M. Markar.	Shroff, Hambantota Katchary.	1st Sept., 1891. ⁷
8. Dr.H.Bava	District Medical Assistant, Uva Province	17th Feb., 1892. ⁸
9. Mr.O.S.Mahamadu	Interpreter, Hambantota Courts.	16th July, 1895 ⁹
10. Mr.C.L. Abdul Cader Marikar	Tamil Interpreter, Colombo Courts. Salary Rs.200 per annum	1st Jan., 1875 ¹⁰
11. Mr.C.M.C.L. Markar	Tamil Interpreter, Colombo Courts. Salary Rs.1,200 Per annum	15th June, 1875. ¹¹
12. Mr.U.L.M.M.A. Marikkar	Shroff, Galle Katchary.	16th Nov., 1877 ¹²
13. Mr.M.L.M. Marikar	Tamil Interpreter, Colombo Courts. Salary Rs.285 per annum	1st Aug., 1893 ¹³

55. de Silva, C.R., *Ceylon Under the British Occupation*, vol. I (Colombo, 1953), p. 217.

56. Cordiner, James, *A Description of Ceylon*, vol. I (Lond., 1807), p. 139

NAMES	NATURE AND PLACES OF OCCUPATION.	DATE OF APPOINTMENT
14. Mr.S.M. Ibrahim	Tamil Interpreter, puttalam Courts. Salary Rs.250 per annum	5th July, 1833. ¹⁴
15. Mr.A.L. Abdul Rahim	Tamil translantor, Kandy Courts. Rs.385 per annum	1st Aug., 1895 ¹⁵

1. *C.B.B.*, 1865 (Colombo, 1866) p. 222.
2. *Ibid.*, 1865 (Colombo, 1866) p. 220.
3. *Ibid.*, 1865 (Colombo, 1866) p. 158.
4. *Ibid.*, 1878 (Colombo, 1879) p. 238.
5. *Ibid.*, 1889 (Colombo, 1890) p. 74.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, 1893 (Colombo, 1894) p. 66.
8. *C.B.B.*, 1982 (Colombo, 1993) p.195.
9. *Ibid.*, 1895 (Colombo, 1896) p.K125.
10. *Ibid.*, 1875 (Colombo, 1876) p.210.
11. *Ibid.*, 1878 (Colombo, 1879) p.372.
12. *Ibid.*, 1880 (Colombo, 1881) p.250.
13. *Ibid.*, 1896 (Colombo, 1897) p.K120.
14. *Ibid.*, 1889 (Colombo, 1890) p.162.
15. *Ibid.*, 1896 (Colombo, 1897) p.K118.

6. The Appointment of Muslims as Consuls in Turkey and Persia

Sir Hercules Robinson, Governor of Sri Lanka from 1865 to 1872, was also distinctly sympathetic to the Muslim community, he was even prepared to employ them in the consular service. Muslims were appointed as consuls to such Muslim countries as Turkey and Persia, which were then playing an important role in the international political arena. The Persians were at this time opening their doors to European investment, and they acted as one of the important commercial bases between Britain and India.⁵⁷ Turkey, too, was part of an important trade route between Britain and India, though its leading trade partners were France and Russia.⁵⁸

The Muslim consuls were not really diplomats, as such. Rather they looked after the commercial interests of Britain and its colonies in Turkey and Persia. They might better be described as "commercial agents for the British Empire".

57. Nashat Guity, *The Origins of Modern Reform in Iran, 1870-80* (U.S.A., 1982), pp. 126-28.
58. Issawi Charles, *The Economic History of Turkey, 1800-1914* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 13 and 137.

Muslims selected for such high ranking posts were those regarded as eminently loyal to the British. They usually came from the leading families and especially from the ranks of the gem merchants. One such was Sir Mohamed Macan Markar. His father, O.L.M. Macan Markar, had business connections with the British Royal family; his clients included the Prince of Wales, later H.M. King Edward VIII (1875), and the Duke of Cornwall and York, later H.M. King George V (1901), both of whom purchased gems from him.⁵⁹

The British apparently chose to appoint Muslims to such posts on account of their knowledge of overseas societies, their international connections, their language abilities⁶⁰ and, of course, their loyalty. Muslims continued to receive such appointments until 1928.

TABLE II
The Appointment Of Muslims As Consuls In Turkey and Persia

Names	Date of Appointment	Date of Termination	Country of Appointment.
1. H.E. Hussain Lebbe Marikar	7th Feb., 1865. ¹	1890 ²	Turkey
2. H.E. H.L.M. Abdul Madjid Effendi	13th March, 1891. ³	1904 ⁴	Turkey
3. H.E. Mohamed Ismail Mohamed Ali	25th Nov., 1890. ⁵	1928 ⁶	Persia
4. Sir. Mohamed Macan Markar. V.C.	30th March, 1903 ⁷	1914 ⁸	Turkey
5. H.E. Ibrahim Didi Ibn Hadji Ali Didi	19th April, 1882 ⁹	1914 ¹⁰	Turkey

H.E.—His Excellency V.C.—Vice Consul

1. Secretary of State despatch No.27 of 7th Feb., 1865.
2. *C.B.B.*, 1890 (Colombo, 1891), p. 252.
3. *C.B.B.*, 1891 (Colombo, 1892), p. 286.
4. *C.B.B.*, 1905 (Colombo, 1906), p. M2.

59. Sir Mohamed Macan Markar was elected in 1924 as the first member for the Muslim seat on the Legislative Council, representing the Muslims of the whole island. He was subsequently elected member of the State Council for the South constituency, by defeating Mr. E.R. Thambimuttu, a seat which he held from 1931 to 1936. He later held the office of Minister of Works and Communications. It was said that his was the deciding vote in the Board of Ministers (1931) when an income tax was introduced in Sri Lanka. He was also the first Muslim openly to favour the establishment of a Sinhalese majority government, provided that justice and fair play was ensured for the minorities. Sri Mohamed Macan Markar received a knighthood in 1938.

60. Cordiner, James, *A Description of Ceylon*, vol. I (Lond. 1807), p. 139.

5. Secretary of State's despatch, No. 463 of 25 Nov., 1890.
6. *C.B.B.*, 1928. (Colombo, 1929), pJ1.
7. Secretary of State's despatch No. 362 of 29th Sept., 1903.
8. *C.B.B.*, 1914. (Colombo, 1915), P.M2.
9. Secretary of State's despatch No. 136 of 13th April, 1882.
10. *C.B.B.*, 1914. (Colombo, 1915), p.M2

7. Summary

During the early period of British rule in Sri Lanka, some Muslims were amongst the last supporters of the Dutch. Once the Dutch formally ceded the maritime provinces of Sri Lanka, however, Muslims became solidly loyal to the British. Overall, throughout the nineteenth century, the Muslims of Sri Lanka benefited from British rule. As the rulers set about their manipulation of the diverse social components of the island, Muslims were seen as potential weapons, as allies who could be used to British advantage. From the time when some Muslims were used by the British to put down the first Kandyan rebellion, their community in Sri Lanka came to benefit from British rule.

Muslims were rewarded with appointments. The post of *Muhandiram* was created for their community, for example, and they also gained from the recommendations of the *Colebrooke-Cameron* reports. They were amongst the groups which benefited from the abolition of compulsory labour in the island. They were also helped by being given permission to own properties in the Fort and Pettah areas. They were also appointed to minor subordinate posts in the Civil Service and, much later, as consuls in Turkey and Persia.

The Kandyan provinces were incorporated into the maritime provinces during British rule and Sri Lanka was, after centuries of disunion, once more united under one scepter. Thenceforward her way lay along the path of peace and the Muslims of Sri Lanka proved to be one of those enterprising communities which participated in the 19th century economic development of the island.

3

AHMAD ARABI PASHA AND THE EGYPTIAN EXILES IN SRI LANKA

1. Revolt, Trial and Exile

During the 1880s, the Muslims of Sri Lanka were brought into close contact with Ahmad 'Arabi Pasha,' the Egyptian nationalist. The Muslims were then at the peak of their economic prosperity and receptive to new influences. 'Arabi was exiled along with some of his brother officers after an Egyptian Army uprising. They arrived in Sri Lanka in 1883. They had all become involved in a celebrated revolt against the government of the Khedieve Ismail and his successor, Tawfiq.² Ismail's follies of palace building and the extravagance of his royal entertainments had plunged his country into financial difficulties. To find new funds, he began to fleece the peasants; but he also became more and more financially indebted to the British and French. Ultimately, these two powers were to gain control over Egypt. Due to his unsound finances, Ismail was then replaced by Tawfiq. Arabi Pasha emerged into prominence at about this time. In the Egyptian Army, the highest ranks were monopolised by the Turkish officers; but the lower ranks were held by Egyptians, and the Egyptian officers resented the fact that they were required to do the more menial tasks. The discontented in the army found in the young Egyptian officer 'Arabi Pasha an eager leader. A nationalist movement grew up around him, which made its target the government of Khedieve Tawfiq.

By the time he came to Sri Lanka, 'Arabi enjoyed a wide reputation as a heroic nationalist revolutionary. He had been born in 1840 in Horiyeh, near Zagazig, in Egypt, the son of a village Sheikh and a member of a fellahin (peasant) family with strong religious affiliations. After a short period of study at Al-Azhar in Cairo, 'Arabi was conscripted into the army at the age of 14

1. I have obtained certain portion from the book written by Arthur C. Dep. on rabi Pasha.
2. The title of "Khedieve" was changed to "Sultan" during the First World War and this was later changed to "King". See Al-Kassab, Khalil Ibrahim Mohammed, "A Comparative Study of Industrial Relations in Iraq, Egypt and Syria". (Unpublished Ph.D-Edinburgh 1972) p.23.

and rose up from the ranks. Due to the favour of Said Pasha, he became a lieutenant at 17, captain at 18, major at 19 and lieutenant-colonel at 20. The Khedive Ismail made him a Pasha and allowed him a wife from the Khedive's family. But 'Arabi soon espoused the cause of the oppressed Egyptian soldiery and, by standing against the policies of Tawfiq, he won widespread support. He became in Egypt a popular and powerful figure, even if only for a short time.³

In 1880s, 'Arabi Pasha founded *hizab al-watani*, the nationalist party, whose object was to unite the peasants and the Turkish elite in Egypt, in order to give forceful voice to their discontent at the autocratic nature of Tawfiq's rule as conducted through his lieutenant, Riaz Pasha. The slogan of this party was "Egypt for the Egyptians". In time the party became the principal opposition to Tawfiq's rule. 'Arabi Pasha made three demands of Tawfiq: firstly, that the Ministry headed by Riaz Pasha be replaced by a nationalist one; secondly, that a constituent assembly be set up; and, thirdly, that the army be increased to 18,000 men. But Cookson, the British consul in Alexandria, advised Tawfiq to take a firm stand against the army's demands.

This advice precipitated a major crisis. The Khedive decided to arrest the army colonels instead of inquiring into their grievances. They were asked to attend his palace, Kasr al-Nile, but, on arrival, were arrested and dismissed from the Service. The soldiers of Ali Fehmi, who were guarding the palace, however, rescued the colonels and compelled the Khedive to dismiss the War Minister and appoint Mahmood Sami Pasha in his place. The colonels then marched back to their barracks in triumph.

The Khedive sought to recover from this reverse by attempting to send the regiments of 'Arabi Pasha and Abd-al-Aal-Hilmi out of Cairo, one to Alexandria and the other to Dimiyate. Mahmudu Sami Pasha resisted this suggestion and was dismissed. The colonels, on hearing of this, marched their regiments to the Abdion Palace, and Tawfiq once again capitulated. This time he had to agree to the elevation of Mahmudu Sami Pasha to the post of Prime Minister and of 'Arabi to that of Under Secretary at the War Office. The Egyptians seem to have welcomed these appointments. 'Arabi was then popularly referred to as "*al-Wahid*", the only one, and "*al-Misri*", the Egyptian. Within two days, Sherif Pasha came to the conclusion that these nationalists enjoyed considerable support, and he felt obliged to appoint Mahmudu Sami Pasha Prime Minister and 'Arabi Minister of War.

3. Ms. no. 141394 (Arabic) *hadwadih al-atihasi fi-misr mintal-rikhyana'ir* (Account of the Egyptian revolt of 1881-1882), (S.O.A.S.) pp. 1-2.

At this point, Britain became involved in 'Arabi's fate. The deposed Khedive Ismail was planning a counter revolution from Naples. Rumours of a coup spread, so that 'Arabi and his friends became afraid of assassination. It was rumoured that 19 officers were planning to murder 'Arabi. They were seized and court-martialled, allowed no defence, and exiled to the Sudan. But in July 1882, attacks on foreigners suspected of supporting Ismail grew steadily more severe, and a mob in Alexandria set fire to the city. The French fleet felt compelled to leave Port Said. Public opinion in England was now roused.

Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent to Egypt to halt the unrest and violence. He occupied the Suez Canal zone. 'Arabi and his associates tried to organise themselves to meet the challenge. Other officers were deployed. Abd-al-Aal-Hilmi was kept at Dimyut. Ali Fahmi was sent to the Canal zone and Mahmudu Fehmi went to Tel-al-Kabir to complete the lines there. But before long Ali Fehmi was contained and Mahmudu Sami captured and made prisoner by a small party of British soldiers. 'Arabi Pasha was without support and, within forty minutes of desultory fighting, his forces were rounded up by the British. 'Arabi himself took refuge in flight. By then a thousand Egyptians were believed to have been killed and wounded. The British gradually brought the riots in Alexandria under control. Soon afterwards, 'Arabi was taken prisoner and handed over to the British Commander, Drury Lowe, in Cairo.⁴ Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and his wife, a granddaughter of Lord Byron, were in Egypt during this period. They were attracted to the study of Egyptian affairs and knew Arabic. When 'Arabi Pasha became powerful, Blunt became his guide, philosopher and friend.⁵

He now endeavoured to help 'Arabi by rousing public opinion in England to support him, through the press and through his powerful political contacts. Many British politicians clearly admired 'Arabi Pasha, whom they considered a nationalist leader, and were concerned about his health and safety.

For example, in the British Parliament, Lord Randolph Churchill asked the Prime Minister whether 'Arabi's life was safe,⁶ and Sir Wilfred Lawson asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether there was any truth in the story that 'Arabi and the prisoners had been

4. For a detailed account, see Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*, (Lond. 1895), pp.20-417; see also, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid, *Egypt and Cromer* (A Study in Anglo-Egyptian Relations), (Lond., 1968), pp. 1-22.

5. Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (Lond., 1895), p.170.

6. *Hansard*, vol. CCLXXIV, British Parliamentary Debate Oct.-Nov. 1882, pp., 1113-1114.

tortured.⁷ Torture had, it was claimed, been inflicted on Mahmudu Fehmi, the Engineer-General, and the thumb screw and kurbush had been reputedly freely used.⁸ Sir Charles Dilke, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, replied that Sir Charles Wilson, his representative, had visited the Egyptian prisoners often and had reported that there was no truth in these allegations. Wilson's visits, so the government claimed, would ensure the prisoners' future safety and keep them free from torture.⁹

Other questions were addressed to the Prime Minister. He was asked whether the government would bear the expense of the defence of the Egyptian officers or whether, as was rumoured, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt was to meet these costs. This claim was based on a letter written by Blunt to the *London Times*.¹⁰ Gladstone, the Prime Minister, replied that such expenses could not be met from public funds.¹¹

The Egyptian government had decided to charge 'Arabi and his associates under three counts: firstly, that of pillaging and burning the city of Alexandria; secondly, turning the Egyptian Army against the Khedieve; and thirdly, inciting the people to civil war.¹²

To support these charges the prosecution proposed to call 140 witnesses. 'Arabi Pasha in turn contemplated calling 400 for his defence. To meet the enormous expense of what was likely to be a protracted trial, a public fund, called the 'Arabi fund, was floated in Britain. Eminent figures, like Lord Randolph Churchill, General C.E. Gordon and Sir William Gregory made generous contributions, but the fund did not swell up as expected.¹³

This compelled Blunt and his Egyptian friends to try a different tack. 'Arabi and the leading prisoners offered to plead guilty to the main charge of rebellion if they were allowed clemency.¹⁴ Mahmudu Fehmi, Yacoub Sami, Toulba Ismath, Abd-al-Aal-Hilmi and Ahmad Abd-al-Ghaffar all then pleaded guilty, were formally sentenced to death and then had their sentences commuted to exile. (It is interesting to note that Queen Victoria

7. *Ibid.*

8. Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (Lond., 1895), p. 416.

9. *Hansard*, vol. CCLXXIV, British Parliamentary Debate, Oct.-Nov. 1882, pp.1101-1102.

10. *London Times*, 24 Oct., 1882.

11. *Hansard*, vol. CCVXXIV, British Parliamentary Debate, Oct. -Nov. 1892, pp. 207-211.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

13. Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (Lond., 1895), pp. 543-44.

14. *Ibid.*, p.471.

was one of those then in favour of hanging 'Arabi Pasha and his friends. She felt that 'Arabi was no more than a common rebel against the Khedieve.¹⁵ Various countries were suggested as suitable places of exile for 'Arabi and his fellow conspirators, such as Cape Colony, Bermuda, one of the West Indian islands and Fiji.¹⁶ Queen Victoria objected to sending 'Arabi to Cape Colony because of Political unrest there. Finally, the British government agreed to send him and his co-conspirators to Sri Lanka.¹⁷

Soon after the decision was reached, 'Arabi and his companions were required to make the following declaration of oath:

We, the undersigned swear by Allah, Who gave the Qur'an, and by our personal word of honour, that we will agree to go to the place which the Government should designate for us, and to stay there.¹⁸

The Egyptian government agreed to the decision to send 'Arabi and the other political prisoners into exile, but in 'Arabi's case they insisted that he must forfeit his property. As some compensation for this, they also agreed that they would provide a maintenance allowance for his women and children.¹⁹

Why Sri Lanka should have been chosen as the place of exile is not known. Obviously it was of importance that it was situated some distance away from Egypt. The rebels would not easily be able to communicate with Egypt, and so 'Arabi Pasha would find it hard to start another revolution from there. It is possible that a second reason may have been that in Sri Lanka Muslims formed only a minority community and were loyal to the British. 'Arabi would not be likely to find enough support there for a revolt against the British government. A third reason for sending the exiles to Sri Lanka may have been its reputation as a peaceful country, politically quiet since 1848, and it was unlikely that the exiles would be able to provoke any general political unrest there. The inhabitants of the country chiefly spoke Sinhalese, while 'Arabi could speak only Arabic and therefore would not be able to communicate easily with them. One positive reason may also have been influential. Sri Lanka was, of course, well known to Muslims, for whom Adam's Peak was regarded as a sacred mountain. According to the legend, when Adam was cast out from Paradise, he placed one foot on the mountain

15. Ms. no. 48632, Hamilton's Diary, 23 Sept., 1882, British Library.

16. C.O. 78/3618, Tel. Foreign Office to Dufferin, 25 Nov., 1882, 28 Nov. 1882.

17. C.O. 30/29/141, Ponsonby to Granville, 22 Nov., 1882.

18. S.L.N.A., No. 4/158, Secretary of State to the Governor, despatch no. 32, 17 Jan., 1883. Translated from Arabic by the author.

19. C.O. 78/3856, Dufferin to Granville, 19 Nov., 1882.

and the other foot on the sea. Perhaps this association made it seem a suitable place of exile for a Muslim nationalist.

2. The Life of 'Arabi Pasha and the Egyptian Exiles in Sri Lanka

All the exiles and their families, with the exception of Abd-al-Ghaffar and his family, left Suez on 27th December, 1882 in the specially chartered ship S.S. Mariotis. They were put under the charge of Maurice Bey, an Englishman in the service of the Khedieve.

He was assisted by Salimattalah, a Syrian. Two of the exiled officers, Abd-al-Aal and Toulba, were not accompanied by their families. 'Arabi Pasha's first wife, a friend of Lady Gregory, also remained behind, as she was expecting a child. The Secretary of State informed the Governor of Sri Lanka, Sir James R. Longden, by telegram:

Twenty, seventh December - Egyptian Exiles proceed Colombo. Provide temporary quarters and funds avoiding unnecessary expense. Will ultimately choose residence in the island. Eight chiefs, seventeen male children, nineteen wives and female children. Total fifty-eight. Despatch follows.²⁰

This was followed by another telegram which indicated that only 7 chiefs and a grand total of 54 were coming. Ghaffar and his family made up the difference.²¹

The arrival in Sri Lanka of these distinguished Muslims, nationalists, patriots, revolutionaries, inevitably became an event of popular interest and was to have long-term effects on the local Muslim community. It was clear from the outset that the colonial government treated the exiles as people of some importance and were cautious in their dealing with them. On 3rd January, 1883, the *Ceylon Times* reported that Lake House, the property of the business firm Loos and van Cuylenberg, had been engaged by the government for 'Arabi Pasha.²² Next day it reported that a telegram had been received asking the government to provide quarters for 'Arabi Pasha and his seven companions and that Messrs. Venn and Company had engaged Lake House, Haarlem House, Braybrooke Lodge, Struan House and probably

20. S.L.N.A., no. 4/157, Secretary of State to the Governor, despatch no. 28, 28 Dec., 1882.

21. S.L.N.A., no. 4/157, Secretary of State to the Governor, despatch no. 35, 30 Dec., 1882.

22. *Ceylon Times*, 3 Jan., 1883.

The Priory for their accommodation. All these were large houses in the city of Colombo.²³

The *Ceylon Times* seems to have obtained this information even before the Government Agent of the Western Province (Mr. F.R. Saunders), under whose authority they came. On 4th January, Mr. Saunders inquired from the Colonial Secretary whether the information given by the newspapers was correct. Several people who had houses to sell had made inquiries from him. He recommended to the government two particular houses and added that there were others available too. The Savings Bank had a large house, the Whist Bungalow, with extensive grounds, which the trustees would be glad to let and which would be a most suitable residence for a large party. Not far from it was another house, belonging to the estate of the late Mr. Daniels, which had been offered. The house contained 14 bedrooms and had 20 to 30 acres of land attached to it.²⁴

Mr. F.R. Saunders felt that the choice of a residence should be made with care. He suggested - obviously with security in mind - that the exiles must "desire retirement and seclusion," rather than seek "the most fashionable and conspicuous parts which I have heard mentioned."²⁵ But he was over-ruled. The Governor asked the Colonial Secretary to inform Saunders that it was considered undesirable to place these exiles in seclusion, and that Lake House, Haarlem House, Struan House and Braybrooke Lodge had been selected. Ultimately, however, the exiles, were, like any other refugees, to be allowed to choose their own residences in the island.²⁶

On 10th January 1883, the chartered ship, S.S. Mariotis, anchored in Colombo Harbour. The Master Attendant (Captain Donnan) and Port Surgeon (Dr. Garvin) boarded the vessel. The Lieutenant Governor, Sir John Douglas, and the Clerk of the Executive Council, G.T.M. O'Brien, followed them aboard, and it was agreed that the exiles would come ashore the next day.²⁷ The excitement which their arrival occasioned was very widely reported. On 11th January, the local Muslim community gathered in large numbers on both sides of the road from the harbour to the barracks, a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile. At this date, there were supposedly 97,775 Muslims in the island, 32,208 of whom lived in Colombo, and a considerable number must have turned out on this occasion.²⁸

23. *Ceylon Times*, 4 Jan., 1883.

24. S.L.N.A., no. 6/6566, letter of Government Agent, Western Province to the Colonial Secretary dated 4 Jan., 1883.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. S.L.N.A., no. 5/213, Governor to Secretary of State, despatch no. 42, 13 Jan., 1883.

28. S.L.N.A., no. 5/213, Governor to Secretary of State, despatch no. 42, 13 Jan., 1883.

According to government orders, the exiles were ultimately allowed to reside in any part of the island except the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The restriction did not apply to the wives, children and dependants of the exiles, who could travel as they pleased, within and outside Sri Lanka. The exiles were to be under police surveillance, coming directly under the Inspector-General of Police, and it seems that the remoteness of the Northern and Eastern Provinces was seen as preventing effective supervision. Hence the limits on their travel within the country.²⁹

After their initial enthusiastic reception, the exiles attracted attention wherever they went and whatever they did. On Friday, 12 January, 1883, 'Arabi paid his first visits to the Maradana Mosque in Colombo. On this occasion the local Muslims followed him in a procession. In April, too, some Muslims went in a procession to Lake House to call on him. This type of attention was paid not only to 'Arabi but to the others also. The government thought that this sort of enthusiasm would go after a short time. They claimed to see the attraction wearing off and hoped there would soon be an end to it.

In the Police Administration Report of 1883, it was observed:

The advent of Ahmad 'Arabi and other Egyptian exiles to our shores was the cause of some excitement among the native population, prior to and after their arrival and particularly on the day of landing. The novelty, however soon wore off and the exiles now move about attracting scarcely any attention.³⁰

This may have been partly true regarding the local interest in them; but 'Arabi continued to hold a special attraction for visitors to the city. He was on one occasion likened to the Uplands Tortoise. This tortoise was a very large one of unknown age, living in the uplands of Mutuwal. All those who called at Colombo supposedly endeavoured to see both.

Shortly after their arrival, the Governor, Sir James Longden, interviewed the exiles at Queen's House in Colombo. His object was to become personally acquainted with them and to learn if they desired to remain permanently in Colombo or instead preferred to remove into the interior. The possibility of the exiles shifting to Kandy, the interior capital,

29. S.L.N.A., no. 6/8856, letter of the Inspector General of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 19 May, 1890.

30. S.L.N.A. no. 6/7432, letter of Inspector General of Police to the Colonial Secretary 15, May, 1883.

may have been under consideration by the government.³¹ At the interviews, 'Arabi Pasha acted as spokesman for the others. He asked for two further houses, one for Abd-al-Aal-Hilmi Pasha and the other one for *Toulba Ismath Pasha*, who were both staying with him at Lake House. He also requested an English education for his children, and the attention of an English doctor for his family, and he complained of the inadequacy of their allowances. Immediate steps were taken to meet most of these requests. Houses were soon found, for example, for both Abd-al-Aal-Hilmi and Toulba Ismath Pasha.³²

In the meantime, there were many sympathizers in England who kept up the pressure on the government. They asked particularly what the status of the exiles was in Sri Lanka. Mr. Labouchere, the Member of Parliament for Northampton, broached this subject. Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice answered:

'Arabi Pasha is not retained as a prisoner, but remains in Ceylon in accordance with a solemn undertaking in writing, which was signed by himself and witnessed by his European Counsel, to the effect that he would remove to any locality indicated by the Egyptian government and remain there until invited to change his abode.³³

This clearly applied to the others as well, for they all gave this undertaking on oath and signed the declaration.

When 'Arabi Pasha arrived in the island he had with him one son and one wife, a girl of 17 years. His first wife, the friend of Lady Gregory, had of course, stayed behind. Soon after his arrival, 'Arabi endeavoured to get his first wife to join him, but she did not want to leave Egypt. The position with regard to her right to join her husband was made clear in November, 1883 by Evelyn Baring:

The Egyptian Government say that they certainly have no objection to this arrangement being carried out, but that Madam 'Arabi Pasha has stated that she has no wish to leave Egypt.³⁴

31. S.L.N.A., no. 4/158, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 41, 30 Jan., 1883.

32. S.L.N.A., no. 4/158, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 67, 21 Feb., 1883.

33. *Hansard*, vol. CCLXXVI British Parliamentary Debate, Feb.-Mar., 1882, p. 305.

34. S.L.N.A., no. 4/162, Secretary of State to the Governor, despatch no. 14, 20 Nov., 1883.

She apparently did not change her mind, for the four wives who ultimately returned with 'Arabi to Egypt were said to be "Kaffir" (i.e. Bedouin Arab) women. But there is no certainty on this point. The wives and children, of course, possessed the freedom to move from Egypt to Sri Lanka and back again, and their movement are not easy to trace.³⁵

Since there were no places in suitable English boarding schools available, the government decided to allow the sons of the exiles to occupy vacant places in the Government's normal school, whose principal was Mr. Hill. They were allowed these places "free of rent for the time being." The boys came under the care of one Mr. James. Two sons of Abd-al-Aal-Hilmi attended Girton School, Maradana, in Colombo. The girls attended English Christian schools. Later, when they move to Kandy, the sons of 'Arabi Pasha and Toulba Ismath attended Kingswood College, Kandy.³⁶ It was perhaps through these arrangements that 'Arabi came to recognise the paucity of modern educational provision for Muslims in Sri Lanka.

The Governor of Sri Lanka, Sir James Longden, took a personal interest in the reception, accommodation and well-being of the exiles.³⁷ In February, 1883, the Secretary of State asked him to allow the General Officer commanding his Majesty's troops in Sri Lanka to obtain any useful military information which the exiles might possess regarding the Egyptian War. The Governor thought this a valuable suggestion.³⁸ He was also willing to devote attention to the exiles' medical needs, placing them under the care of a European physician, Dr. White.³⁹

3. The Increase in the Exiles' Allowances

With regard to the complaint of the exiles that their allowances were inadequate, however, no immediate response was given. They remained dependent upon the first allowances of the Egyptian government, which had arranged with the Imperial Ottoman Bank of Alexandria to pay each exile a sum of £30-15s.-4d. per month.⁴⁰

35. S.L.N.A., no.4/157, Secretary of State to the Governor, despatch no. 142, 28 Dec., 1887.

36. S.L.N.A., no. 6/6668, letter of Acting Director of Public Instruction to the Colonial Secretary, 21 Feb., 1883.

37. S.L.N.A., no.4/158, Secretary of State to the Governor, despatch no. 67, 21 Feb., 1883.

38. S.L.N.A., no. 4/158, Secretary of State to the Governor, despatch no. 67, 21 Feb., 1883.

39. S.L.N.A., no. 6/6668, letter of Acting Director of Public Instruction to the Colonial Secretary, 20 Feb., 1883.

40. *Ibid.*

The Egyptian government took some time to settle the problems regarding the property owned by the exiles and the property jointly owned by them and their wives. Until this was settled, a fair and final distribution of any increase among them was not possible. But on the recommendation of the Governor, Sir James Longden, an interim increase was eventually made.⁴¹

In 1883 the proposed increase in 'Arabi Pasha's allowance came up for discussion in Parliament.⁴² Labouchere, the Member of Parliament for Northampton, raised the question. Sir Edmund Fitzmaurice answered that the Egyptian government, with great liberality, had granted an increase of £500 per year, to be distributed among the exiles according to their needs and a further sum of £20 per month for the maintenance of 'Arabi who was the poorest. Parliamentary agitation clearly helped to bring results.

Meanwhile further claims were made by Ali Fehmi, Yacoub Sami, and Mahmudu Sami and were sent to the Secretary of State by the Governor with his own observations upon them.⁴³ This necessitated yet another careful examination to ascertain whether their allowances were sufficient. While this was going on, writs were being served upon them by the Egyptian government concerning their property interests in Egypt. This added to their discomfort and made the rapid settlement of their financial affairs imperative. In Britain the memoranda of the three exiles were therefore carefully scrutinised.⁴⁴

Ali Fehmi's memorandum reached the Prime Minister along with the comments of Lady Augusta Gregory, the wife of Sir William Gregory, who had earlier been Governor of Sri Lanka (1872-77). Of Madam Ali Fehmi, Lady Gregory stated:

This poor woman was of good family and position in Egypt, has been a devoted wife and brought up her children carefully and well (I speak from personal knowledge). It is heart-breaking to her to see her husband and children in absolute poverty and she must indeed be driven to despair when she thinks of leaving them and going away alone in broken health to relieve them of the burden of her support.⁴⁵

41. S.L.N.A., no. 4/158, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 69, 21 Feb., 1883.

42. *Hansard*, vol. CCLXXXI, British Parliamentary Debate, 2 July-19 July, 1883. p. 39.

43. S.L.N.A., no. 4/165, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 385, 19 Dec., 1884.

44. *Ibid.*

45. S.L.N.A., no. 4/165, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 385, 19 Dec., 1884.

Madam Ali Fehmi's description of her own plight is even more touching:

I have parted with everything I had, selling my things under their value, till now I possess nothing whatever by which to support life. I am reduced with my children to remain within doors, not having proper clothes for myself and my children whom you saw at Cairo.⁴⁶

The Governor confirmed this:

She has been compelled to dispose of much of her trinkets and she and her daughter cannot leave their homes because they have no suitable dresses in which to appear.⁴⁷

According to Madam Ali Fehmi, £30 was not sufficient to maintain the 14 persons of her household for more than 30 days.

Sir William Gregory, assisted by the Inspector-General of Police, made a particular study of the contents of the memoranda. Gregory, who had seen the inside of Ali Fehmi's house, observed that "it was absolutely destitute of furniture."⁴⁸

The contents of Yacoub Sami's memorandum puzzled the Secretary of State, and clarification of certain points became necessary:

I am to observe that Lord Granville is not able to judge whether £10 per month may be considered a proper house rent to pay in Ceylon for a person in his position, but his Lordship does not think that a horse and carriage, a gardener, and a watcher, which are items in the exile's expenditure, as described by himself, can be looked upon as reasonable requirements for one representing himself to be without private income.⁴⁹

Sir William Gregory pointed out that Yacoub Sami was not living in luxury and that he needed a watcher and a gardener and had to pay a house rent of £10 per month. In the case of Mahmudu Sami, it was established that

46. S.L.N.A., no. 4/166, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 39, 28 Jan., 1885.

47. *Ibid.*

48. S.L.N.A., no. 4/166, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 39, 28 Jan., 1885.

49. S.L.N.A., no. 4/162, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 274, 14 Jan., 1884.

his wife had a private income of about £300 per year. He, at least, was not considered to be in difficulties.

After studying their cases, the Inspector-General sounded distinctly sympathetic:

They live very quietly and inexpensively in much the style in which a lieutenant-colonel commanding an English Regiment would live there. If this is considered a suitable style for those who are ex-pashas and ministers and before were colonels, at the lowest, then their incomes are hardly sufficient, and those of six of them might be increased from Rs. 4,000/- to Rs. 5,000/- per annum, 'Arabi's left at Rs. 6,000/- as at present.⁵⁰

Owing to the difficulties of assessing the real value of the property held by the exiles and their wives, and since the property possessed by some of the exiles' wives was only expressed in land, of which the annual value was not known, the Egyptian government found it hard to make its final decision. Eventually it decided to treat each exile as being equally devoid of private means unless it could be proved that this was not so.⁵¹ Accordingly, 'Arabi Pasha's allowance was raised by £19-4s.-8d. a month and the allowance of the others by £7-4s.-8d. On the instructions of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India paid these increases from 31st March, 1886. When Labouchere raised this in Parliament in 1886, Bryce, the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, replied that all the exiles now received £435 a year, except 'Arabi Pasha, who received £600 a year.⁵²

The British authorities suspected that there was some opposition to the more generous treatment of 'Arabi:

I am disposed to agree with the Inspector-General and to believe that there is a strong feeling of dissatisfaction among the others at Arabi being pensioned more liberally.

Was Bryce's view, especially as 'Arabi did not share any of his increase with the others.⁵³

50. S.L.N.A., no. 6/7264, letter of the Inspector General of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 17 Sept., 1885.

51. S.L.N.A., no. 4/162, Inspector General of Police to the Colonial Secretary, despatch no. 14, 16 Oct., 1883.

52. *Hansard*, vol. CCCIV, British Parliamentary Debate, 26 March-17 April, 1886, p. 103.

53. S.L.N.A., no. 4/275, Secretary of State to the Governor, despatch no. 245, 17 August, 1884.

Since the exiles were precluded from earning a living in Sri Lanka, the allowances meant much to them, strangers, as they also were, in a foreign land. Their style of living, the size and standard of the houses they rented and their establishments, all depended on this. They felt it necessary to maintain a certain position among their co-religionists and obviously wished to be free from monetary embarrassments. At first they had to depend entirely on these allowances. Later they became better off when their wives' wealth became available to them.⁵⁴

If forced to be careful, they were not exactly poor. The allowances they received, Rs. 6,000/- for 'Arabi and Rs. 4,350/- each for the others, compared favourably with the salaries of the Sri Lankan public servants of standing. Their allowances brought them in line with an army colonel, whose salary was Rs. 5,400/-, a chief surveyor, Rs. 5,000/-, a factory engineer, Rs. 5,000/- a Crown Counsel, Rs. 4,000/-, a Lieutenant Colonel, Rs. 4,800/- and a cadet in the Civil Service, Rs. 3,750/-.⁵⁵

After Abd-al-Aal Fehmi's death, the exiles asked to be allowed to share his allowance. The Egyptian government, however, having raised their allowance once, decided not to make any more increases, and, in 1892, the Governor was informed by the Secretary of State that Her Majesty's government was not prepared to press the government of Egypt to depart from its decision, nor itself to increase the allowances.⁵⁶ After this, no further appeals for increases of allowances were made.

4. Foreign and Local Visitors

In Sri Lanka, 'Arabi Pasha was subject to frequent intrusions on his privacy, not always of a pleasant nature. Prominent personages as well as ordinary mortals dropped in to see him. 'Arabi endeavoured to meet all who called. Among the early callers were the Russian Count, Boutourlini, who came with Lord Gifford to interview him. As more and more people called on him, it was observed:

All the distinguished personages that call here will no doubt look upon Arabi as a local sight that ought to be seen, but we shall not be surprised if after a little while Arabi was not at home to his numerous callers.⁵⁷

54. *Ibid.*

55. *C.B.B.*, 1886, (Colombo, 1886), p. 85.

56. *S.L.N.A.*, no. 4/275, Secretary of State to the Governor, despatch no. 15, 21 Jan., 1892.

57. *Ceylon Times*, 9 Feb., 1883.

But 'Arabi Pasha continued to see his visitors. In 1884, the Australian touring cricketers, led by W.L. Murdock, made a point of calling upon him.⁵⁸

The visitors were often gracious and were kindly received. In August 1890, Dr. F. Idrisawa brought for 'Arabi a book, written by Tokai Saasosi bearing the title, "The Memoir of Arabi". Caroline Corner, who wrote an account of her visit to Sri Lanka, recorded that she saw 'Arabi, "seated on his prayer carpet, with the Holy Qur'an his inseparable companion by his side."⁵⁹

Mr. C.H.Z. Fernandou, a local political figure, also recorded a visit he had made, when he was only 6 years of age. 'Arabi Pasha made him sit in front of him and spoke to him of the love one should have for one's country. Incidents of this kind suggest that the exiles were widely respected and, though Muslims, were regarded with affection even by local Buddhists, Hindus and Christians. Their presence must undoubtedly have raised the consciousness of the local Muslim community and increased its sense of solidarity.

The exiles took advantage of all the opportunities to impress which came their way. One early example of their active participation in a public function was the reception they gave to the Blunts, who came especially to see them. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and his wife arrived in the island, aboard the *S.S. Goorkha*, in October 1883. The exiles, their co-religionists and other well-wishers gathered at Colombo harbour and accorded the Blunts a most cordial welcome. Welcome speeches were made by two lawyers, Messrs. Siddi Lebbe and Fidelis Perera. The Blunts were then taken in a procession to their bungalow. Thirty carriages took part in the drive. Seventy guests sat for breakfast that morning. On 9th November, the Blunts were given a dinner at Lake House. Places were laid for 120 guests, and the catering was done by the Metropolitan Hotel, "in a manner becoming to Muslims." Lake House was at its most splendid. The garden surroundings were illuminated and decorated, and the police band played music. This was followed a few days later by a breakfast party at the residence of Mr. M.S.J. Akbar at Kew Gardens, Slave Island, Colombo.⁶⁰

These kindness to visitor were not entirely altruistic. For all the note of sustained gratitude and celebration which accompanied their visit, in the

58. *Ceylon Times*, 10 April, 1884.

59. Corner, Caroline, *The Paradise of Adam*, (Lond., 1908), pp. 206-216.

60. Mr. C.H.Z. Fernando was also a member of the Legislative Council. See *C.B.B.*, 1930 (Colombo, 1931), p. D.1.

month or so which the Blunts spent in Sri Lanka they were given every opportunity to see for themselves the type of life which the exiles led, and what they had to contend with. In fact, the exiles seldom missed an opportunity to place their case before the eyes of influential members of the British community.

It is clear that the exiles always yearned to get back to Egypt. They made use of every opportunity they got to effect their release. They made it a point to meet important visitors to the island, acquaint them of their unhappiness and ask them to use their good offices. As a result, questions were regularly raised in the British Parliament regarding their release. In 1885, Justin Hently McCarthy asked whether, in view of the prevailing situation in Egypt, 'arabi Pasha could be recalled. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, replied that Her Majesty's Government could not accept the suggestion.⁶¹

Again, in 1886, Labouchere asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, "Whether he will use his good offices to bring the exile of these gentlemen from their native country to a speedy close."⁶² The Under Secretary, Bryce, replied:

Considering the causes which led to the deportation of these exiles and the consequences which might follow their return to Egypt, Her Majesty's government can hold out no hope that they will use their good offices in the way suggested.⁶³

5. The Exiles' Petitions to the British Government

In 1887, 'Arabi Pasha, Ali Fehmi and Yacoub Sami publicly demonstrated their loyalty to the British by participating in Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations held in Colombo. With others, they marched past the Governor's pavilion. This procession gained much publicity in England. A report in one Sri Lanka paper says:

A jubilee procession being formed to pass before the Governor, armed troops marched by, after which Messrs. Arabi, Yacoub Sami, Ali Fehmi stepped out and in a sad and solemn manner walked past the Pavilion.⁶⁴

61. *Hansard*, vol. CCXLIV, British Parliamentary Debate, 18 Nov., 1884-3 March 1885, p. 1177.

62. *Hansard*, vol. CCCIV, British Parliamentary Debate, 26 March-16 April, 1886, p. 103.

63. *Hansard*, vol. CCXXXII, British Parliamentary Debate, 2 March-21 March, 1888, p. 1272.

64. *Ceylon Times*, 27 June, 1887.

This matter was also brought up in the British Parliament by Pickersgill, the Member of Parliament for Bethnal Green, who asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention had been drawn to this procession and whether there was any truth in the reports. He also asked whether 'Arabi and his friends had formed part of the procession as captives of war or as subjects of the Queen. Sir Henry Holland, the Secretary of State, answered that the troops did not form any part of the Muslim procession. About 2000 school children and members of the Muslim community including the exiles, had participated, but entirely voluntarily. These three exiles had presented an address to the Governor to be sent to the Queen. This contained expressions of loyalty, of congratulations and also of gratitude for the gracious treatment accorded to them in Sri Lanka.⁶⁵

The exiles never gave up sending petitions to the British government requesting their release. In 1888 a petition was sent to the Queen and forwarded to the Consul-General in Egypt, but no reply was received. The Secretary of State indicated to the Governor of Sri Lanka the attitude of the Egyptian government:

But it is scarcely to be expected that the Egyptian Government will be favourable to the release of those persons whose presence in Egypt they would regard as a danger to public tranquility, and Lord Salisbury does not think that it would be either right or politic to press them to permit it against their judgement.⁶⁶

In 1889 the matter of the exiles' health came up in Parliament. William Redmond, Member of Parliament for Fermanagh, asked the Under Secretary of State whether Arabi Pasha had complained that the climate of Sri Lanka was injurious to him and whether because of this he wanted a transfer to another country.⁶⁷ Sir James Ferguson House, in Horton Place, Cinnamon Gardens, and continued there till he moved to Kandy in 1892.⁶⁸

Abd-al-Aal-Hilmi moved from Lake House to the Retreat, and from there to Braemar House, where he lived till his death in 1891. Mahmudu Fehmi moved out to Struan House, and then to the Retreat at Matakuliya, a house belonging to Mr. Daniels. From there he moved to St. Helen's, Cotta Road, Borella. Mahmudu Sami went to reside in Kandy. Very soon, others followed him. Mahmudu Fehmi, however, stuck on at St. Helen's, Cotta

65. *Hansard*, British Parliamentary Debate, 11 Aug.-25 Aug., 1887, p. 949.

66. S.L.N.A., no. 4/261, Secretary of State to the Governor, no. 282, 7 Sept., 1888.

67. *Hansard*, vol. CCXXXIII, British Parliamentary Debate, 21 Feb.-15 Mar., 1889, p. 1662.

68. S.L.N.A., no. 6/7432, letter of the Inspector-General of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 20 May, 1883.

Road, Borella. This was probably because it was more convenient for him as his son attended the Medical College, closeby. The father-in-law of Mahmudu Sami, Yacoub Sami, joined him and also occupied a house in Tricomalee Street. From there he moved to a house in Halloluwa. In 1893, 'Arabi Pasha came to reside in Kandy, where he moved into Hermitage House. Toulba Ismath occupied a house in Tricomalee Street, while Ali Fehmi occupied a house in Upper Lake Road, both in Kandy.⁶⁹ Kandy has a milder climate than Colombo, so health as well as expense could have suggested these removals.

6. The Health of the Exiles

Although issues regarding the health of the exiles were raised in the British Parliament as early as 1890, a Medical Board in Sri Lanka was appointed only in 1899.

The Medical Board was composed of Dr. W.K. Kynsey (Civil Medical Officer), Brigadier Surgeon W.C. Robinson (Senior Army Medical Officer) and Dr. John D. MacDonald, Medical Superintendent, General Hospital, Colombo. Dr. Kynsey was President of the Board.⁷⁰

Dr. W. Grace Dort, who treated 'Arabi Pasha, reported:

I consider the climate of Ceylon with its diurnal variations of temperature, its frequent changes of weather, its excessive humidity, occasional malaria laden winds, has had a most trying, a most exhausting and enervating influence on the family.⁷¹

Dr. C.W. Vangezil's report on Toulba Ismath stated:

I am of the opinion that the climate of Ceylon is too damp for him to reside in permanently.⁷²

On Abd-al-Aal-Hilmi, had reported:

I am of opinion that the climate of Ceylon does not agree with him and that the humidity of the atmosphere (which is a marked feature

69. S.L.N.A., no. 6/7432, letter of the Inspector-General of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 15 May, 1893.

70. S.L.N.A., no. 4/315, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 6, 13 Mar., 1899.

71. S.L.N.A., no. 4/315, The Report submitted by the Medical Board to the Governor, 14 May, 1899.

72. *Ibid.*

of the climate in Ceylon) is to blame for the attacks of illness.⁷³

Philips Britto, a registered medical practitioner, reported thus on Ali Fehmi:

It would appear to me that this humid climate of Ceylon is not conducive towards the health of persons who have been born and bred in a dry climate like that of Egypt.⁷⁴

The Board, however, did not recommend that the exiles be moved to another country, because of the cost of the government. Therefore, in spite of the medical reports, their official conclusion was that the climate of Sri Lanka had no serious adverse effects on the health of the exiles, except for *Toulba Ismath*⁷⁵ The Secretary of State directed the Governor to inform the exiles, except Toulba, that they were in good health and that "any change of air that any of them may require can be obtained in Sri Lanka itself."⁷⁶

However, during the exiles, stay in Sri Lanka, two of them were in fact to die. Abd-al-Aal-Hilmi died on March 19, 1891. It was established that death was due to apoplexy. He was followed to the grave by *Mahmudu Fehmi* in 1894. It was officially held that this death was due to "natural causes" and that it was in no way accelerated by the climate of Sri Lanka.⁷⁷

7. Pardons for the Exiles

The wives and children of the exiles also sent petitions asking for their release. Dilonba, the wife, and Gariba, a child, of Yacoub Sami addressed a memorandum to Queen Victoria. So did Inifer, the wife of Ali Fuad, the son of Toulba Ismath, Mahmudu Sami's wife, Amina, and his children, Coumeria, Fatima, Zainab and Mushira also petitioned the Queen. They appealed to her maternal instincts. They said, among other things, that children of the Egyptian exiles had married since the exiles had been banished to Sri Lanka and that their children had now married, and the exiles had never seen their grandchildren. The memorialists felt assured that "Your

73. S.L.N.A., no. 4/315, The Report submitted by the Medical Board to the Governor, 14 May, 1899.

74. *Ibid.*

75. *Ibid.*

76. S.L.N.A., no. 4/315, Secretary of State to the Governor, despatch no. 6, 18 Aug., 1899.

77. S.L.N.A., no. 4/315, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 118, 19 May, 1884.

Majesty as mother and grandmother will be able to enter into and sympathies with their feelings."⁷⁸ In 1899 the exiles themselves sent petitions asking for their release. In a joint memorandum they gave the undertaking that "they would keep away from politics, if released."⁷⁹

They were on firmer ground when asking for support on the strength of their good conduct during their long years of exile. The behaviour of the exiles had been exemplary throughout. From time to time official references were made regarding their good conduct. In 1884 Governor Gordon commented thus:

I might add that the behaviour of Arabi and his companions during their stay in Ceylon has been exemplary. They have neither engaged in political intrigue nor assumed the attitude of martyrs, but have, with quiet dignity and good taste, cheerfully accepted and made the best of their position; not thrusting themselves forward into notice, nor, on the other hand, shrinking from society and readily performing the duties which naturally fall to them as well educated members of the Mohammedan community.⁸⁰

In 1897, the Governor, West Ridgeway, made a fuller comment on their behaviour:

I feel it however, due to these gentlemen to say that during their 14 years residence in Ceylon they have honorably observed the terms of their exile, have given no trouble to the colonial government and have conducted themselves in a commendable manner. During that period two of their number have died.⁸¹

It is interesting to note that these exiles did not do anything to create a public stir. No references to them were made in Sri Lanka's Legislative Council, even if regular references to them did appear in the British Parliament. The exiles remained under the care and protection of the Inspector-General of Police and their movements were watched, with the utmost secrecy. In 1890, on the eve of his retirement, the Inspector-General (Mr. Campbell) even asked for a bonus for this work; but, as he was not a

78. S.L.N.A., no. 4/306, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 315, 11 Oct., 1877.

79. *Hansard*, British Parliamentary Debate, 26 June-16 July, 1899, p. 970.

80. S.L.N.A., no. 4/315, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 118, 19 May, 1884.

81. S.L.N.A., no. 4/315, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 17, 23 March, 1897.

detective officer he was denied it. It was asserted that the Government and Colony of Ceylon had "in no way profited by Mr. Campbell's services in regard to the safety and well-being of the exiles."⁸² They were in fact, not a source of trouble or concern during the entire period of their exile.

By the end of the century, the remaining five exiles were virtually harmless and were in declining health. They were all over 60 years of age. Ill health was given as the reason for the pardon granted to Toulba Ismath by the Khedieve at the beginning of 1899. Chamberlain, in a despatch to Governor West Ridgeway, asked him to inform Toulba Ismath that "the Khedieve has consented to withdraw in his case the prohibition hitherto in force and to allow him to return to his native country."⁸³

At the same time the other exiles were to be informed in the clearest manner that for the time being no hope could be held out that the permission given to Toulba Ismath would be extended to others in the same category.

Toulba Ismath immediately made all arrangements to leave and departed on 12 February in the German steamer "Preussen".⁸⁴

Mahmudu Sami became seriously depressed after this. But, in July, his pardon too came; he remarked:

Anyhow the door has been opened. Toulba has gone. I am going, no doubt the others will follow.

Now only two exiles, 'Arabi Pasha and Ali Fehmi, were left behind. Their pardons were delayed and there was a rumour that 'Arabi had declined to accept the pardon. But, in April 1901, after the Duke of Cornwall had interviewed 'Arabi and Ali Fehmi, their pardons were expected to follow. In May the pardons at last arrived. 'Arabi received a telegram from his friend Wilfrid Blunt, offering him his warmest congratulations. At an interview soon after, 'Arabi is reported to have said:

I am an old man now, nearly 61 years of age, and all I ask is to be allowed to die in my dear homeland and that my bones be buried in peace.⁸⁵

82. S.L.N.A., no. 6/8860, letter of the Inspector-General of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 15 Nov., 1890.

83. S.L.N.A., no. 4/315, Secretary of State to the Governor, despatch no. 6, 6 Jan., 1899.

84. *The Ceylon Times*, 12 July, 1899.

85. *The Ceylon Times*, 25 May, 1901.

Ali Fehmi left for Egypt soon after, but 'Arabi had to wait. He had some difficulty in finding the money and the means to take his family across to Egypt. While arrangements were being made, he also had to attend numerous farewell functions. First, there was a farewell dinner for him and his family at the Muslim school in Kandy. After this, he bade farewell to his friends and came to Colombo where he stayed with Carmjee Jafferjee [a Boroah businessman] at Essaivilla. He next attended a function at the Al-Madrastu al-Hameediya school at Newmoor Street, Colombo. The school-children lined the road and cheered him as he passed, and boys sang songs in Arabic in praise of him. Their verses were handed to him.⁸⁶

On the 19th September 'Arabi's party arrived at the work-place of Carmjee Jafferjee at Pettah. He was accompanied by four wives, "kaffir" (Bedouin Arab) women, heavily veiled, nine sons, six daughters, one nephew, four Sinhalese women servants and five others. A diversion was created by the fathers of the servant women who did not want them to leave. The police intervened and made it clear to both parties that the women were engaged only for the trip. Then 'Arabi Pasha, driven by two horses, was brought to Colombo harbour. A gathering of about 500 greeted him and a choir of Moorish women sang a farewell song. A decorated boat took them to the ship.⁸⁷

Though 'Arabi Pasha's departure had been so much delayed, in the British Parliament it was made to seem like a deliverance. The Marquess of Landsdowne, answering a question from Lord Newton, remarked:

Nor will I endeavour to determine whether the noble Lord was right when he told the House that the Mussulman's Paradise was to be found in Ceylon. Whether it be a paradise or not I do not know, but Arabi Pasha was very glad to be allowed to leave it.⁸⁸

The day on which 'Arabi Pasha was due at Cairo from Suez, the railway station was crowded with his supporters. But one correspondent expressed an interesting view:

He will be acting wisely if he discourages as much as possible the expression on the part of his friends and admirers of over enthusiasm, which is out of place and date.⁸⁹

86. *The Ceylon Times*, 14 Sept., 1901.

87. *The Ceylon Mail Weekly Independent*, 20 Sept., 1901.

88. *Hansard*, vol. XCV, British Parliamentary Debate, 11 June-26 June, 1901, p. 530.

89. *The Egyptian Gazette*, 30 Sept., 1901. "Ahmad Effendi Arabi's Return", (Cairo, 1901).

'Arabi Pasha died on 22nd September, 1911 in Cairo. The death seems to have been kept secret until the funeral was over.⁹⁰ Perhaps the family accepted the newspaper's verdict and did not wish to have a great many people attending the funeral.

8. The Influence of 'Arabi on his Motherland and on Sri Lanka

In modern Egyptian history 'Arabi Pasha occupies an important place, and by the people of Egypt, he has not been forgotten. During the bombardment in Alexandria there were several attacks on foreigners. This posture of driving the foreigners from Egypt appeared heroic in retrospect and was said recently to have influenced the later President of Egypt, Gamal Abdul Nasser, in his decision to nationalize the Suez Canal on 26th July, 1956⁹¹ and then to drive the British from Egyptian soil.⁹²

'Arabi Pasha was also important in Sri Lanka. He and the exiles who were sent to Sri Lanka seem to have been unhindered locally and they were able to move about in the island from place to place, even though subjected to close police surveillance. The colonial government in Sri Lanka did not treat 'Arabi Pasha in any way as a political prisoner - rather, they treated him as a celebrated nationalist leader. The British government must have felt that one day these exiles might return to their motherland, and it was just as well to remain friendly with them in the meantime.⁹³

'Arabi Pasha and the exiles lived in Sri Lanka for nearly twenty years. During those twenty years 'Arabi Pasha had a great influence on the local communities, Sinhalese as well as Muslim. His influence on the Sinhalese community in Sri Lanka derived from his role as a nationalist leader. In Egypt he had formed the nationalist party called *hizab al-watani*.⁹⁴

The may solgan of this party was "Egypt for the Egyptians". This kind of nationalist thinking, "Ceylon for the Ceylonese", began to appear amongst the Sinhalese roughly at the time of the arrival of 'Arabi Pasha. He was acquainted with various members of the Sinhalese elite and, as mentioned above, he is known to have propagated the idea of children being taught to be patriotic. He is also reported to have told some adult members

90. Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen, *My Diaries* (Being a personal narrative of events, 1888-1914), (Lond., 1932), p. 776.

91. Mahmoud Riad, *The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East* (Lond., 1981), p.9.

92. This statement was made by Muhammad Haikal, one of the famous political historians of Egypt, on television, channel four, in Britain on 2 Nov., 1986.

93. Vijaya Samerweera, "Arabi Pasha in Ceylon, 1883-1901", 81, I.C. vol. XLIX, Oct. 1926, p. 219.

94. Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen, *My Diaries*, (Lond., 1932), pp.45 and 876.

of the Sinhalese elite that they should love their mother country, and that they should strive for freedom from foreign dominance. He also propagated the idea that Sri Lanka should ultimately be administered by Sri Lankans. Clearly such advice from such a source must have had influence. His presence and his reputation must surely have encouraged the Sinhalese to think of themselves as a people struggling to become a nation.

His period in Sri Lanka also witnessed a great growth in the Temperance Movement. This organisation was began by Dr. C.A. Hewavitharane (brother of Angarika Dharmapala). It did not initially have any explicit political overtones. The main aim of the movement lay in its Buddhist ideas. But it linked consumption of liquor, of which it disapproved, with Westernisation and Christianisation. Some years after 'Arabi's departure, between 1911-14, this organisation was to attract elite Sinhalese families, like the Fernandos, and the Senanayakes, and gradually developed a political nationalists feeling among the Sinhalese.⁹⁵ It is interesting to note D.S. Senanayake believed in quiet and peaceful agitation for Independence of Sri Lanka.⁹⁶ If 'Arabi Pasha was one of their sources of inspiration, it was sad that this organisation was later involved in the 1915 communal violence between the Sinhalese and the Muslims.

By then, too, in 1915 A.E. Goonesinha had formed the Young Lank League, the aim of which was to achieve independence ('Swaraj') from the British.⁹⁷ After the arrival of 'Arabi Pasha in Sri Lanka, religious and cultural sentiment increasingly was exploited for political purposes,⁹⁸ and it may not be fanciful to suppose that his presence had helped to bring this about.

'Arabi Pasha's greatest influence, however, was on the Muslim community. One sign of this influence was an Islamic revival which took several different directions. The Muslim revival in Sri Lanka was to be directed mostly towards Muslim law and education. On Muslim law, 'Arabi was acknowledged as a respected authority. For example, in 1885, the Government Agent of the Western Province asked 'Arabi Pasha to give him a report on a Muslim Marriage Ordinance before submitting it to the Legislative Council. 'Arabi Pasha was able to compare the proposed

95. Gunawardena, R.D., "The Reform Movement and Political Organisations in Ceylon with Special Reference to the Temperance Movement and Regional Associations, 1900-1930" (Unpublished Ph.D., University of Peradeniya, 1976), pp.14-73.

96. *Ceylon Morning Leader*, 25 Nov., 1911. The question of Nationalism in Sri Lanka was brought first by Mr. M.B. Abdul Cader, a Sri Lankan Moor, in 1917, in an article entitled, "Some Weak Points of our So-called Nationalism". See *Ceylon National Monthly*, vol.IV, no. 9, 1917, pp. 191-195.

97. Goonesinha, A.E., "My Life and Labour", *Ceylon Observer*, 25 July, 1965.

98. *Ceylon Observer Magazine*, 17 April 1970.

legislation to what he knew of such matters in other Muslim countries, such as Egypt. His recommendations were then incorporated in the Ordinances, thereby helping to modernise Muslim law in the island. He also encouraged the Muslims to start newspapers for themselves. One which was established on his prompting was called the "Muslim Naisen" (Muslim Friend).⁹⁹

Historians have argued that the Muslims of Sri Lanka were notoriously educationally backward before the arrival of 'Arabi Pasha.¹⁰⁰ The Muslims had continuously shown an interest only in their own particular form of religious-based education as opposed to secular education. They had set up a few Arabic colleges, in such places as Welgama,¹⁰¹ Galle, Matara, Puttalam, Kaniya' and Maharagama. But most of the Arabic colleges were situated in remote parts of the island. Only one college was founded in the capital and very few of the students who enrolled actually passed the course. It has been suggested that this was because involvement in trading was pursued at the expense of devoted study.

Most of the students who attended these Arabic colleges were not from elite families. They were the children of petty traders. In the British period, the children of the elite were given Western education in non-Muslim schools. In the Arabic colleges, students were taught Arabic grammar (Nawa), Arabic literature, logic, Islamic history, Qur'anic interpretation (*Tafsir*) mysticism (*Tasawwuf*), rules and regulations for reciting the Qur'an (*Tejwid*), delivery of religious sermons and astronomy. These colleges offered eight year courses in Arabic and Islamic studies, and the graduates were awarded the title "Moulavi"¹⁰²

During the British period most Muslim children who went to school attended these religious institutions. Clearly Muslims were suspicious of the pro-Christian bias in State-run British schools. There were grounds for this. Ever since the British had occupied Sri Lanka, the government's policy was to see the local people converted to Christianity. The first British Governor, Fredrick North, emphasised that the main religion of the island was to be Christianity.¹⁰³ The second British Governor, Sir Thomas Maitland, en-

99. S.L.A.R. *Western Province*, 1885, (Colombo, 1885), "Muslim Marriage Registration Ordinance".

100. *Muslim Naisen* (Muslim Friend), 27 June, 1882.

101. Vijaya, Samaraweera, "Arabi Pasha in Ceylon, 1883-1901", *J.C.* no. XLIX, Oct. 1976, p.224.

102. The word "Moulavi" is from a Persian word which was introduced along with Sri Lankan Arabic teachers. The word technically means Master of Theology. But in Sri Lanka this word is used to describe the local Arabic teachers. See Haim, S., *Persian English Dictionary*, (Tehran, 1894), p.871.

103. S.L.N.A., no.3/21, North to Early Camden, 27 Feb., 1805.

couraged the establishment of schools where Christianity was to be taught.¹⁰⁴ Even Colebrooke, in the early 1830s, recommended that the schools to be established should be under the direction of the Christian clergy of the island.¹⁰⁵ It is therefore not surprising if the Muslims of Sri Lanka did not choose to send their children to such schools.

Although the British government encouraged the establishment of Christian schools, however, there was also an attempt, as early as 1800, to create a government school for Muslims in Sri Lanka; and one may even have been opened about that time.¹⁰⁶ But, even if government schools for Muslims were favoured, probably few Muslims were actually prepared to attend them before 1890.¹⁰⁷

By the 1880s and 1890s, some leading spokesmen for the Muslim community were willing to start Western-style school themselves, believing now that the future prosperity of the community could be ensured only in this way. In November, 1884, the first Anglo-Mohammedan Boys' School (al-Madrast al-Khariyyat al-Islamiyya) was formed in Colombo.¹⁰⁸ This was a Muslim educational institution, but chiefly secular and distinct from and supplementary to sectarian centres. This school did not last long, however, because the financial resources dried up.

In 1891 in Colombo a Muslim Education Society was formed. Mr. M.C. Siddi Lebbe, the lawyer, played a key role. He wished to start schools for Muslims, and, in the same year as the society was founded, he appealed to the local Muslims to create an institution for modern Muslim education in Sri Lanka. This appeal was made after Friday Jumma prayers (midday prayers) at Maradana Mosque in Colombo.¹⁰⁹ But the leading members of the community ignored the request.

It was not until 1892 that 'Arabi Pasha persuaded Wapachcha Marikar to start an advanced school for Muslim boys. There were major personal differences between the two leading authorities on the subject, Mr. Wapachcha Marikar and Mr. I.L.M. Abdul Azeez, over who should start the school, what kind of school should be started and where it should be located. These dis-agreements were ultimately resolved and a Muslim school was established, under the active patronage of 'Arabi Pasha, named al-Madras-

tul - Zahira (Zahira College). This school had 85 students and the Director was Mr. A.M. Wapachcha Marikar. In 1894 this college was re-registered as Maradana-Muhammadan Boys School. In 1913, al-Madrastul-Zahira became Zahira College. In time, it came to enjoy a very high reputation.

'Arabi Pasha was loyal to the British government and he behaved with great circumspection as an exile on the island, but he also influenced local communities to think of themselves with pride and, through education, to prepare for the modernisation of their societies.

104. S.L.N.A., no.5/75, Liverpool to Maitland, 30 Sept., 1810.

105. C.O. 54/122, Colebrooke to Secretary of State, 24 Dec., 1831, "Education".

106. S.L.N.A., no.5/1, Governor to the Secretary of State, despatch no. 98, 30 Jan., 1803.

107. A.R.D.P.I., 1894, "Mohammedan Education", (Colombo, 1894), p.D.21-24.

108. A.R.D.P.I., vol. IV, 1895, "Mohammedan Education", (Colombo, 1896), p.D.16.

109. *Ceylon Times*, 21 Jan., 1891.

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4

MUSLIMS AND COMMUNALISM

1. Communal Violence Between Sinhalese and Muslims During the British Period

The riots of 1915 between Muslims and Sinhalese were a revelation. They demonstrated two unexpected factors: the weakness of the British colonial police force in the face of civil unrest and the changed attitude of the Sinhalese to the Muslims. Earlier, during the Portuguese and Dutch periods, Muslims had even sometimes been protected by the Sinhalese. In 1915, the whole Muslim community felt at risk from Sinhalese rioters.¹

In the early part of June 1915, news arrived in London of the outbreak of serious rioting in Sri Lanka. The Ministry of Military Affairs in Singapore (which was the headquarters for British military intelligence for South and South-East Asia) had initially suggested that this could be the work of Germans, trying to foment political unrest in Sri Lanka.² But a telephone call from the Governor, Sir Robert Chalmers (1913-16), convinced the British authorities that this was not so and that the riots had resulted from what they called racial friction between Muslims and Sinhalese, intensified by trade animosities.³ The Germans could not be held to be responsible. The rioting broke out first of all in Kandy, in the early hours of the morning of May 30th. There it had died down by the evening of May 31st.⁴ But it soon spread rapidly elsewhere.

There had, of course, been differences between Buddhists and Muslims at least since the early period of British rule.⁵ But by the twentieth century matters had become very serious. In 1907, the coast Moors of

1. Jayasekera, P.V.J., "Social and Political Changes in Ceylon 1900-1919 with Special Reference to the Disturbances of 1915" (Unpublished Ph.D., University of London, 1969), p. 266.
2. C.d. 8167, Governor to Secretary of State, 11 Aug. 1915.
3. C.d. 8167, Governor to Secretary of State, 11 Aug. 1915.
4. De Souza, Armand, *Hundred Days in Ceylon Under Martial Law in 1915* (Colombo, 1919), pp. 17-28.
5. See chapter 2.

Gampola constructed a new mosque on Ambagamuwa Street. After its construction, the Basnayake Nilame⁶ of Walhangoda Dewalaya⁷ organised a Buddhist Perehera. He proposed that it should follow the usual route of such processions, claiming this as a privilege supposedly guaranteed by the Kandyan convention of 1815. On this occasion, however, the Muslims objected to the route, which passed in front of their newly constructed mosque. They registered a protest with the Government Agent, Sexton, against the procession, first in 1907, and then again in 1908. Nothing was done, however, until a third protest in 1909, upon which the perhera procession was rerouted by a police decision, in spite of the counterpleas of the Basnayake Nilame. But when the argument was raised yet again, in 1911, the Government Agent agreed to a return to the traditional route past the mosque.⁸

In 1912, the Government Agent, Saxton, issued the licence for the procession, but now only on condition that music would be banned when it passed before the Muslim mosque and other places of worship. This ruling was unacceptable to the incumbents of the Walhangoda Dewalaya because it meant a restriction on that they saw as a traditional right. The Basnayake Nilame instituted a suit against the Attorney-General of the colony in the District Court of Kandy, and Judge Paul E. Pieris handed down a decision in his favour on 4th June, 1914. The Judge ruled that the Government Agent had deprived the Walhangoda Dewalaya of a valid ancient right, assured by the binding compact of the Kandyan convention.⁹

On February 2, 1915, an appeal against this decision was lodged in the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. The appeal was upheld, the decision of Judge Pieris being overturned by Justices Shaw and De Sampaye, who found that the local Board and Police Ordinance effectively superseded the terms of the Kandyan convention. Justice De Sampaye said he felt "as a Sinhalese thoroughly ashamed" of the earlier decision. This appeal verdict, however, caused widespread dissatisfaction among the majority religious community in Sri Lanka. It was felt to be a defeat for Buddhists, and resentment built up against the government and against the Muslims.¹⁰ The Gampola Buddhists even lodged an appeal against the decision with the Privy Council in London.¹¹

6. Principal lay officer of a shrine of gods.
7. Land attached to shrine (devale) of gods of the Buddhist pantheon.
8. *Sarasvi Sandaresa*, 7 April, 1914. See also, *Sinhala Buddhaya*, 18 Oct.
9. C.O. 54/781, Governor to secretary of State, 31 May, 1915.
10. C.O. 54/782, Governor to Secretary of State, 31 May 1915. See also, Balasingham, K. (ed.) N.L.R., vol. XVIII, 1916 (Colombo, 1916), pp. 193-213.
11. C.O. 54/783, Governor to Secretary of State, 16 Aug. 1915.

This case took another turn later in 1915. The parties at odds over the Esala Perahera¹² had, with the help of government officers, arrived at a new arrangement. Certain times were agreed for the processions to take place so as to threaten no likely offence or disorder. The Crown's view was that there was no further reason to intervene, since the government's sole objective had been to preserve public tranquility.¹³ This decision appears to have been seen as a satisfactory compromise, for the appeal to the Privy Council was then withdrawn. But unrest still grew, and there were further clashes between Muslims and Buddhists, in such places as Kandy, Kurunegala and Badulla.¹⁴

The instigators of these new communal troubles were believed by the Government to be the Buddhists. The Colonial Secretary was sent to Kandy by the Governor, Sir Robert Chalmers. There trouble had broken out over an attempt by some Buddhists to block the pavements in front of Muslim shops, on the route of Buddhist processions at a spot where, in former years, the procession would halt and distribute alms.¹⁵

These disturbances were reported in an article in *Dinamina* (Daily Star) which also published the text of the 1815 Convention (in Sinhalese) and various articles expressing the view of nationalist minded leaders. Another pro-Buddhist paper, in March 1915, carried a report on "outrages" of Muslims against Buddhists.¹⁶

May 29th, 1915, being Weesak Day (the Buddha's birthday), was a public holiday. After nightfall in Kandy, a procession of seven elephants, led by the Maligava (Temple of the Tooth at Kandy) giant tusker, wearing its special silvered tusks and bearing the tooth of Lord Buddha in a jewelled casket, made a stately circuit of the town, accompanied by drummers, dancers and torch-bearers. At about 1 A.M., the procession, now including a band of musicians in a decorated cart, turned from King Street into Castle Hill Street.¹⁷

There the Muslim mosque was open and lit up, and groups of Muslims stood on either side of the street. Inspector Cooray, observing what he saw as a deliberate stance on the part of the Muslims, instructed the

12. The Buddhist religious procession accompanied by dancers and musicians on a full moon day.

13. *Dinamina*, 2 Mar. 1915.

14. *Dinamina* 2 March 1915.

15. C.O.54/781, (29055), Governor to Secretary of State, 1 July 1915.

16. *Sinhala Jatiya*, 2 March 1915.

17. C.O. 54/781, Despatch no.320, Governor to Secretary of State, 31 May, 1915, pp.1-2.

Buddhist carol-singing party to divert into Cross Street, to avoid the mosque altogether. The leaders of the procession obediently turned the cart into the street indicated. At this moment, the Muslims began clapping and jeering, which proved to be more than the Sinhalese could bear. They halted indecisively, looking towards the mosque. As they stood, a still larger crowd, headed by another party of carol-singers in a second cart, turned into Castle Hill Street. They joined the first party. As they all advanced, a number of stones and empty bottles fell on them, hurled from the upper storeys of two near-by shops and from the platform of the mosque. The crowd rushed forward, picked up stones and threw them at both mosque and shops. They then rushed into the mosque, pulling down its iron bars and smashing its glass window-panes. They also broke into the adjoining shops, where they seized boxes of grain and groceries and flung them into the street.¹⁸

The police presence, consisting of one Inspector and six constables, was unable to make itself felt. Mr. Cooray sent to the police station for reinforcements, who on their arrival, arrested 25 men on charges of riot and house breaking. Meanwhile, there had been further signs of trouble in other parts of Kandy on the same night. An inquisitive crowd had gathered outside a Muslim shop at around 8 P.M and a fire was started near-by. A servant boy had been reputedly thrown to his death from the upper storey of Kingswood College, Kandy. The few constables standing by near the college made no move to make an arrest, although exhorted to do so by the crowd. Claiming that the murderer was a Muslim, the crowd started looting goods from the Muslim shops and burning their booty in the middle of the road, which caused the police some alarm. On the outskirts of the city there was trouble too. All along the peradeniya Road, as far as Gatembe, the streets were littered with piles of burning loot, and in Gatembe the mosque was burnt down. In Pahatha Dumbara (Lower Dumbara) and Uda Dumbara (Upper Dumbara) Muslim shops and houses were looted and burnt, reputedly by members of the Rodiya casts (an untouchable caste); but there were no casualties in these areas.¹⁹

Troubles were also brewing outside Kandy. At about 10 o'clock on the same night, the Superintendent of Kandy railway station received a message from the Government Agent at Colombo to stop the night mail at Kadugannawa, as he believed that a large crowd of Muslims were travelling from Colombo to Kandy to join forces with the Muslims of Kandy against the Buddhists. The Superintendent contacted the station master at Kadugannawa, telling him to detach the carriage containing the Muslims there, while

18. C.d. 8167, Governor to the Secretary of State, 31 May, 1915, pp. 1-2.

19. C.O.54/782, (33884), Governor to Secretary of State, 1

the rest of the train should be allowed to proceed. A crowd of Sinhalese, who had got wind of this move, gathered outside the station gates; but the station master had the gate shut. The police found some Muslims and gave them the option of remaining in their carriage and returning to Colombo by the next train or being marched to the police station. They chose to return to Colombo.²⁰

Finally, on the morning of May 30th, the Inspector-General of Police, H.L. Dowbiggin, arrived in Kandy by special train with a number of Panjabi soldiers, and peace was gradually restored.²¹

Elsewhere, greater calm prevailed. In the North-Central and North-Eastern provinces, perhaps primarily because these were Tamil-speaking areas, there were only isolated incidents, such as attacks in Nattandiya, reputedly by a well-known local criminal called Aron Appu, who set fire to many Muslim shops and homes.²²

Rumours of Muslim attacks on Buddhist property in such places as Kadugannawa, Matale and Gampola spread quickly along the railway line. This apparently aroused Sinhalese hostility in Rambukkanna, Veyangoda, Henarthagoda, Kelaniya, Angulana, Rawawatta, Ambalangoda, Galle, Matara, Negombo, Kochchikada, Nattandiya, Madampe, Minuwangoda, Divalapitiya, Kuliyapitiya, Kurunegala and Colombo, the capital.²³ In all these places, the local Muslims had trouble from the mobs. In Matale, too, Muslim property was damaged, although not as badly as elsewhere, and two Muslim men were found dying of knife wounds. When crowds descended on Rambukkanna from Kandy and looted both shops and houses, the Muslims had recourse to gun-fire to see also, *Sarasavi Sandaresa*, 9 June 1914; *Dinamina*, 9 Feb. 1915 (Sinhalese newspapers). defend themselves.²⁴ In Gampola, too, they fired on a crowd to defend the mosque. On the night of May 30th, a Buddhist mob, apparently inflamed by the address of a Buddhist priest, cried out, "Sadu"²⁵ and started attacking Muslim shops.²⁶ Significantly, neighbouring Sinhalese, Tamil and Chetty shops were untouched.²⁷

20. C.d. 8167, Governor to Secretary of State, 29 June, 1915, p.5.

21. C.O. 54/782, (26639), Governor to Secretary of State, 9 June 1915.

22. C.O. 54/783, Governor to Secretary of State, 16 August 1915.

23. Ramanathan, P., *Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon*, (Lon., 1918), pp. 39, 43, 50-58. See also *Sarasavi Sandaresa* June 1914; *Dinamina*, 9 Feb. 1915 (Sinhalese newspapers).

24. Macan Markar, A.K., *Short Biographical Sketches of Macan Markar and Related Families* (Colombo, 1977), p. 22.

25. "Sadu" means "Holy".

26. C.O. 54/782, Governor to Secretary of State, 16 July, 1915.

27. *Ceylon Morning Leader*, 2 June, 1915.

In the North-Western province, rioting broke out at Polgahawela on May 31st and at Alawwa on June 1st, both incited by crowds arriving from Kegalle. In the Southern province, the area from Panadura to Kalutara was also the scene of many incidents. Most of the rioters there belonged to the Karawa caste (Fisher caste). Rumours spread that Sinhalese women were being assaulted and that Viharas (Buddhist temples) were being attacked.²⁸ The rioters also burnt Muslim shops and houses in the towns and villages of the area between Colombo and Matara. There, too, the culprits were reputedly the Buddhist Karawa, who were also said in one account to have slaughtered large numbers of Muslims in these areas "like so many fish".²⁹

It was in Colombo, however, that the Muslims suffered most, and the events of these days are the worst recorded incidence of violence against Muslims in the history of Sri Lanka. The city of Colombo had been the first Muslim settlement in Sri Lanka and now had a large Muslim population with a flourishing trading base. This, one historian has suggested, may have provoked jealousy on the part of the low country Sinhalese.³⁰

According to one of the best-known merchants of Colombo, Mr. S.L. Naina Marikar, the Colombo police took no action to deal with the violence. The mob's main objective was looting and the merchants had to take steps to defend their properties.³¹ Mr. Marikar faced a mob of 50 Sinhalese who assembled at his gate and demanded a sum of Rs. 50 as protection money. Mr. Markar ordered his own guard to shoot if necessary, and the crowd dispersed. His son-in-law, Mr. Macan Markar, told similar stories of intimidation and violence by mobs in the city.

At about 4 P.M. on May 31, J.G. Frazer, Government Agent for the Western province, was presiding in Colombo over a meeting of the Sanitary Board. He was called by J.H. Daniels, Superintendent of Police, and informed that Sinhalese railway fitters, regarded by colonial officials as a chronically unruly group, had clashed with Muslims near the factory yard. Daniels asked Frazer to call out the troops. Frazer obliged. While this was being done, Frazer went to the yard accompanied by several Sinhalese political figures. After this confrontation, the workers dispersed quietly.³²

28. C.d. 8167, Governor to Secretary of State, 1 June 1915.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Jayawardena, Kumari, "Economic and Political Factors in 1915", *J.A.S.*, vol. XXIX, no. 2, Feb. 1970, p.227.

31. This information was obtained from the following: Macan Markar, A.H., *Short Biographical Sketches of Macan Markar and Related Families* (Colombo, 1977), pp.17-18.

32. C.d. 8167, Governor to the Secretary of State, 29 June, 1915, p.4.

The shops along Maradana Road and Skinner's Road were immediately closed. Eight men were arrested and taken for questioning to Maradana police station, followed by a crowd of Sinhalese clamouring for their release. Mr. Daniel finally ordered them to be set free. Similar incidents took place elsewhere in Colombo when Sinhalese men, arrested for arson and looting, were set free by the police apparently on the demand of the mob. Some Muslims, fearing for their safety, tried to disguise themselves by wearing Sinhalese garments. Some women and children from Wolfendhal Street, Siripa Lane, Newmoor Street, Silversmith Lane and Aluth Kade tried to take refuge in Dam Street police station. But there they were ill-treated and prevented from returning to their homes.³³

On the same day, there had also been trouble in Pettah, Maradana and Borella, which the police were completely unable to control.³⁴

F.R. Senanayake, a member of Colombo Municipal Council and a Buddhist, joined by other Sinhalese leaders, drove around Colombo attempting to calm the crowds. At the Kolonnawa Temple, he said:

We have been told that a person calling himself "Egantha Hamudurwo (our leader) has informed people that the Muslims are coming in their thousands to attack the temple.

This story had apparently preceded Senanayake's party everywhere. He firmly denied the truth of it; but it was too late. As far away as Hanwella (30 miles from Colombo), the same rumour inspired an impromptu Perehera, led by an elephant. Thousands followed it, including even a few Tamils and Burghers.³⁵

The Governor was at the King's Pavilion in Kandy when he heard, around 6 o'clock in the evening, that Buddhists in Colombo were attacking Muslims. Next morning, the Colonial Secretary, Stubbs, arrived; but the problems in Colombo were now getting out of hand. He informed the Colonial Secretary, A.E. Collins, of the situation in the most frightening terms; on June 1st looting had lasted all day long, the police were ineffectual, volunteers and the town guard all too few to cope with the constantly shifting, regrouping gangs. At 9 A.M. the troops had fired on the mobs, clearing the streets. Martial law had been declared in several Western provinces on June 2 and then in Colombo where 150 Muslims had been killed.³⁶

33. Ramanathan, P., *Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon* (Colombo, 1916), pp. 17, 24, 34-35.
34. C.O. 54/782, Governor to Secretary of State, 16 July, 1915.
35. Ramanathan, P., *Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon* (Lond., 1916), pp. 261-63.
36. C.O. 54/782, R.E. Stubbs to A.E. Collins, 2 June, 1915.

Sir Robert Chalmers, the Governor, met with leaders of the Muslim community, such as the Hon. W.M. Abdul Rahman and Sir Muhammad Macan Markar, who had toured the devastated areas in order to try to restore calm.³⁷

The Governor rapidly concluded that martial law had to be imposed. It was necessary for several reasons: to permit the authorities to arrest and detain those denounced by Muslims as murderers or criminals; to permit the imposition of more severe sentences on such people than would be tolerated by the Civil Courts; to enable them to assess and exact the compensation due to the Muslims by methods which civil law would not permit; to bring a speedy end to the disturbances; to ensure adequate food supplies and, as a related measure, to restore the Muslims to their role in the community; and finally to ensure punishment of the guilty.

Under martial law, the Government took the steps it considered necessary to control the troubles. The trouble-makers were punished and summary justice was meted out to those accused of murder.³⁸

Early in July, the Governor in the Executive Council reviewed those cases for which capital punishment had been used under the General Courts martial. One case in particular, that of Pedris of the Washer caste, was noted: as with other cases, the Brigadier-General had not considered it necessary to consult the Government. But he had ordered the execution of the convicted man on the morning of July 7. What made this case exceptional was that the local Buddhists had offered to pay the Sri Lankan government his weight in gold for Pedris' release.³⁹

On July 8, however, the Governor received a memorandum reflecting growing Sri Lankan indignation about these trials from two tamil members of the Legislative Council, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan and K. Balasingham. This document had been signed also by James Pieris, H. Marcus Fernando and W.H. Rigby among others. The burden of the appeal was that, however restrained military men acting as judges might be, their lack of knowledge of the customs of the Sri Lankan people disqualified them as judges. They requested that a special tribunal of experienced judicial officers of the colony should supercede them in such cases.⁴⁰ By 3rd November, 2,722 people had been tried, either in district courts or before

37. C.d. 8167, Governor to Secretary of State, 29 June, 1915, pp. 1-3.
38. C.d. 8167, Governor to Secretary of State, 8 July, 1915, p. 24.
39. C.d. 8167, Governor to Secretary of State, 8 July, 1915, p. 24.
40. C.d. 8167, Governor to Secretary of State, 8 July, 1915, p. 24.

special commissioners. Of these, 412 serious cases had been remitted to the general courts martial, which found 358 guilty, while acquitting 54.⁴¹ 248 sentences of penal servitude were handed down of various terms of imprisonment. Of these, 233 of the convicted were Buddhists, 7 Roman Catholics, 4 Muslims, 2 Protestants and 2 Hindus. A further 25 people were sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour; and 83 were sentenced to death, although those sentenced were later commuted to penal servitude or rigorous imprisonment. In the Western and North-Western provinces, 6 people were executed; in the Southern and Kandyan provinces, 34 were executed.⁴²

As for Matale, De Souza says:

In case no. 4043 in the police court at Matale, 17 villagers of Gurubella were tried for rioting and for burning two boutiques run by Muslims. Of the accused, one died while the case was pending, one was acquitted and the rest were fined heavily and sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment. On June 17th in Kandy, after the riots, nine persons were charged with treason and riotous demolition of buildings. They were all convicted and sentenced to death, and, although none of the charges involved murder or manslaughter, all nine sentences were confirmed by the Governor and duly carried out. Seven other persons charged with riotous demolition of buildings who came before the same court were all convicted and sentenced to penal servitude for life. On July 27th in Colombo 13 persons were charged with riotous demolition of buildings. All were convicted and sentenced to penal servitude for life.⁴³

During the communal troubles, a number of leading political activists were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy and treason, including the Hon. D.S. Senanayake (later to be the first Prime Minister of Sri Lanka), his brother F.R. Senanayake (M.M.C. Colombo), D.B. Jayatillake and C.P. Dias (M.M.C. Colombo) and C.A. Hewavitarane. All of them were released subsequently on a high bail bond. But the brother of the Buddhist leader Anagarika Dharmapala, C.A. Hewavitarane, was brought to trial, found guilty of riotous activity and sentenced to penal servitude. Bitterly worded complaints about this were addressed to the British Governor of Sri Lanka.⁴⁴ One of the charges brought against the Hon. D.S. Senanayake was that

41. C.d. 8164, Governor to Secretary of State, 11 August, 1915, p. 47.

42. Wijayawardhana, D.G., *The Revolt in the Temple* (Colombo, 1953), p.47.

43. De Souza, Armand, *Hundred Days in Ceylon Under Martial Law in 1915* (Colombo, 1919), pp. 13 and 114.

44. C.O. 54/782, (29924) R.E. Stubbs to A.E. Collins, 8 June, 1915.

having rented a shop to a Muslim he tried later to drive the Muslim away. This was admitted, but its relevance to the riots was disputed. On the contrary, it was claimed that when the troubles started Senanayake's attitude toward his tenant changed, and he had now befriended him.⁴⁵

The Riots Damage Ordinance, which was not even published, outlawed the dissemination of scurrilous literature concerning Muslims and made provision for the indemnification of these Muslims who had suffered losses.⁴⁶

The damage done to Muslim property was assessed as follows:

1. *Western Province*
Colombo-Rs.3,195,271.
2. *The Sabaragamuwa Province*
Kegalle-Rs.552,600
3. *Central Province*
Kandy, Gampola, Matale-Rs.536,205.
4. *Southern Province*-Rs.341,021.
5. *North Western Province*-Rs.152,646

The total assessment for damage to Muslim property came to Rs.5,427,745.⁴⁷ It was also estimated that the cost of putting down the disturbances and maintaining order was approximately Rs. 1,000,000. Many of the Muslim claims for damages were reduced after enquiry. In the municipal area of Colombo, Muslims claimed damages amounting to Rs. 3,141,017,66; the sum awarded them was Rs. 916,696,83. In Moratuwa, the sum claimed was Rs. 916,696,83. The sum awarded was Rs.428,000. A Muslim widow who claimed Rs.59,280 was awarded Rs.250/-. One Muslim who claimed Rs. 6000/- was awarded Rs.75/-; another claimed Rs. 17,287, and was awarded Rs.2,403. Yet another, who claimed Rs.3,254 was awarded Rs.200/-⁴⁸. In no case was the award higher than the claim. Even if it were true that the Muslim claims had been deliberately inflated in all those cases, it is striking that no Buddhist or Tamil leaders made any representations to ask for any more substantial damages for the affected Muslims.

During the outbreak of trouble in Colombo, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan was in India. He did not return to Sri Lanka till 9.15 A.M. on

45. Ramanathan, P., *Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon* (Lond., 1916), p.263.

46. C.d. 8167, Governor to the Secretary of State, 15th June, 1915.

47. Wijayawardhana, D.G., *The Revolt in the Temple* (Colombo, 1953), p.47.

48. De Souza, Armand, *Hundred Days in Ceylon Under Martial Law in 1915* (Colombo, 1919), pp.108-109

Wednesday, June 2.⁴⁹ He then made a tour around Sea Street, Pettah, and around Kotahena. Finally he visited the premises of the Hindu Temple in Pettah.⁵⁰ His apparent sympathy for the Muslims surprised them. The Muslim leaders, like Messrs. S.L. Naina Marikar and O.L.M. Macan Markar had seen Ramanathan as sympathetic to the Sinhalese, not the Muslims.⁵¹ Yet Ramanathan had tried to act the pacifier. However, once the troubles were over, Ramanathan proved to be a critic of the Muslims of Sri Lanka.

On June 15, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan rose in the Legislative Council armed with hundreds of petitions from Buddhists, to speak against the Muslim role in the riots and on behalf of the Sinhalese leaders.⁵² He demanded a Royal Commission to inquire into the communal troubles and argued fearlessly in condemnation of the excesses perpetrated by the British forces in suppressing the riots. He condemned both the Act of Indemnity, which placed the civil and military authorities beyond the reach of the law, and the Riot Damages Ordinance, which exacted collective retribution in the form of compensation levied from the Sinhalese residents of specified localities, irrespective of whether they had been implicated in the riots or not.

Finally, he asked the Council to appoint a Select Committee of the Legislative Council to investigate certain charges of grave miscarriages of justice and needlessly harsh repressive measures. These charges, he said, had been brought against British officials, both military and civil, and others, such as planters. None of them concerned the Sinhalese leaders. In the ensuing debate, an English resident and member of the Council, Harry Creasy, supported Ramanathan.⁵³

On August 11, Chalmers defended the Government in the Council. He argued that not a single man had been shot without trial in Sri Lanka, and the executions had been necessary for the maintenance of law and order. A commission of enquiry was, nevertheless, appointed, to investigate the accusations. This made much play in its report of the fact that the immediate cause of the riots was the attempt by Muslim traders in Gampola to prevent by force the passage of the Buddhist Perehera along the road of the Kahatapitiya mosque in Gampola.⁵⁴

49. Ramanathan, P., *Riots and martial Law in Ceylon* (Lond, 1916), pp.39-43.

50. *Ibid.*, pp.39-43.

51. Macan Markar, A.H., *Short Biographical Sketches of Macan Markar and Related Families* (Colombo, 1977), pp.22-23.

52. Ramanathan, P., *Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon* (Lond., 1916), pp. 39 and 258.

53. Ramanathan, P., *Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon* (Lond., 1916), pp.51-58.

54. C.d. 8167, Governor to Secretary of State, 11 Aug., 1915, p.31.

In a confidential report to the Governor in the same month, Dowbiggin, the Inspector-General of Police, provided a twist to the tale by laying the blame on the leaders of the Theosophical Society. They, he claimed, had stirred up trade rivalries between the communities.⁵⁵

Some Muslims and some Chetties had become land-owners in Sri Lanka. Dowbiggin saw this as exciting envy. He also saw the main aim of the writings of the Buddhist leader Anagarika Dharamapala as one of keeping Sinhalese tradition alive at the expense of the other communities, such as Muslims, Hindus and Christians.⁵⁶ He, too, had used his writings to inflame the feelings of the Sinhala people against the Muslims. Dowbiggin was also convinced by a telephone conversation taped by the police that the Temperance Movement had played a part in the outbreak of the troubles.⁵⁷

The Temperance Movement was a powerful agent which he saw as conducting a persistent crusade against the Muslims. It had been financed by Buddhist leaders, like D.D. Pedris and N.S. Fernando.⁵⁸

After the Governor's speech in the Legislative Council, which was partly based on Dowbiggin's confidential report, the Sinhalese community held a public demonstration. At a meeting of September 15, 1915, they demanded a Royal Commission to inquire into both the causes and the suppression of the riots. The demonstration was coordinated with the help of several leaders, like E.W. Perera, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan and D.B. Jayatillake, who later joined with James Peiris and others to draw up a memorandum calling for the release of a number of still-imprisoned persons and for the reduction of the severe fines. Affidavits were presented to the Government of Sri Lanka for forwarding to the Colonial Office. The memorandum made several points: firstly, that men had been shot in cold-blood, sometimes in the presence of their families; secondly, that after the riots, hundreds of men, especially in the Kelani valley and Ratnapura areas,

55. S.L.N.A., no. 62/229, "Confidential Report by I.G.P. Dowbiggin", Aug. 1915.

56. Manor, James, *Sri Lanka in Change and Crises* (Lond., 1984), p. 157.

57. S.L.N.A., no. 62/229, "Confidential Report by I.G.P. Dowbiggin", August 1915. The Temperance Movement was started by Dr. C.A. Hewaratharane (brother of Anagarika Dharamapala). The organisation campaigned against the consumption of liquor and against westernisation and Christianisation. The organisation was at its peak in 1903-5. It drew crowds from the rural areas. Between 1911-14 members of the Sinhalese elite became leaders in the organisation, like D.S. Senanayake who had made a fortune in the plumbago industry. For further details see Gunawardena, R.D., "The Reform Movement and Political Organisations in Ceylon with Special Reference to the Temperance Movement and Regional Association 1900-1930" (Unpublished Ph.D., University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya 1976), pp.14-73.

58. S.L.N.A., no. 62/229, "Confidential Report by I.G.P. Dowbiggin", August 1915.

were flogged, often on the orders of the military or volunteer officers and without preliminary investigation; thirdly, that evidence and some confessions were obtained by the police and military by means of force or intimidation; fourthly, that prominent Sinhalese gentlemen were arrested and held without charges being brought against them for weeks, only to be released later, after depositing cash and a securities bond; and fifthly, that the Punjabi soldiers - "mostly Muhammedan" - were guilty of harsh and improper conduct.⁵⁹

After the public meeting, the Christian leader Mr. E.W. Perera left for England to enlist the sympathy of the British Government. The Buddhist leader Mr. D.B. Jayatillake and the Hindu Tamil leader Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan joined him there later. The ostensible reason for sending Ramanathan to London was to try and prevent the assent of the Secretary of State being given to the Riot Damages Bill. The Governor of Sri Lanka advised the Colonial Office to see that he was not given an interview with the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State readily agreed to that suggestion because he felt that Ramanathan was a self-advertiser and a mischief-maker.⁶⁰ But D.B. Jayatillake remained in London for three years until the release of the Sinhalese who had been imprisoned by the Government of Sri Lanka.

As a result of these elite Sinhalese representations, the attitude and policy of the senior administrators towards the Muslims changed. Previously, the principal source of trouble to the British administration had been the western-educated, middle-class, low country.

Buddhists from the Karava caste, the very group who had been leading agents in the Buddhist revival and in the Temperance and the Proto-Nationalist movements. The British almost automatically assumed that the rioters must have belonged to the same groups. Later this interpretation gave way to the notion that the riots did not constitute an uprising against the Crown, but were rather a reflection of Sinhalese-Muslim communal problems.⁶¹ the Gampola case, which came before the Privy Council in London, was settled by taking this view. An agreement was reached in 1916 that the organisers of Esala Perehara should come to an arrangement by which the times for the procession were to be so arranged as to cause no offence. Once the Gampola Perehara case was settled,⁶² it was not difficult

59. C.d. 8167, E.W. Perera to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 22 Oct., 1915, p.49.
60. C.O. 54/785, Governor to the Secretary of State, 28 Oct., 1915, Minutes of Collins, 24 Nov., 1915.
61. Wijayawardhana, D.G., *The Revolt in the Temple* (Colombo, 1953), pp. 126-27.
62. Balasingham K., (ed.) *N.L.R.* vol. XX, (Colombo, 1919), pp. 376-77.

to allow the release of the Sinhalese leaders.⁶³

Sir Ponnambalam ramanathan returned to Colombo in 1918 to a hero's welcome, and was acclaimed as a leader of the Sinhala community. Soon after the troubles, the British government replaced the Governor of Sri Lanka, perhaps to appease the embittered educated leaders. The new Governor, Sir John Anderson (1916-18), even went as far as to criticise some European volunteers, who were found guilty of a number of unwarranted shootings after the disturbances were over.⁶⁴

2. The Causes and Consequences of the Communal Troubles of 1915

To interpret the riots of 1915 merely as a reflection of religious tensions is to disregard a number of significant economic, social and political developments which influenced the course of events. The stress on religious differences may also obscure the important question of why the British colonial officials should have taken such drastic measures during the riots and exacted such severe reprisals long after the riots were over.

Even the exact nature of the communalism displayed in the riots is controversial. Some commentators have suggested that only coastal Moors were involved and that they were responsible for initiating the unrest.⁶⁵ This was clearly untrue. The main trouble in Kandy, for example, involved, and partially was initiated by, the Sri Lankan Muslims.⁶⁶ Elsewhere coastal Moors were always in a minority amongst the Muslims caught up in the troubles.⁶⁷ whatever offence Muslims gave, the attacks upon them were grossly out of proportion. The explanation for such an over-reaction can only be complex; some Sinhalese regarded the Muslims as rivals or threats. They were principally concerned not about matters of religious ideology but about commercial concerns, especially the impression which they had that they were at a disadvantage against Muslim traders. The Buddhist anti-Muslim campaign was largely sponsored by Buddhist businessmen who were commercial rivals of the Muslims and by their spokesman amongst the educated leaders.⁶⁸

63. Wijayawardhana, D.G., *The Revolt in the Temple* (Colombo, 1953), pp. 126-27.
64. C.O. 54/805, Governor to the Secretary of State, 26 May, 1917.
65. *Sarasavi Sandaresa*, 7 April, 1915 (Sinhalese newspaper). See also *Sinhala Buddhaya*, 18 Oct., 1915 (Sinhalese newspaper).
66. C.O. 54.781, Governor to Secretary of State, 31 May, 1915.
67. S.L.N.A., No. 65/229, "Confidential Report by I.G.P. Dowbiggin", August 1915.
68. Jayasekera, P.V.J., "Social and Political change in Ceylon 1900-1919 with Special Reference to the Disturbances of 1915" (unpublished Ph.D. Lond., 1970) p. 105.

The Buddhists often accused the Muslims of being overly aggressive in business.⁶⁹ These facts suggest that economic rivalry itself could inspire Sinhalese anti-Muslim feeling.⁷⁰ The flourishing trading enterprises of some Muslims bred resentment. As the Sinhalese emerged within the business arena, Muslims who had earlier been active in trade, both inside and outside the country, came to appear as an obstacle.⁷¹ Another source of anti-Muslim prejudice stemmed from the spread of racial ideas. Some writers tried to make the Muslim community out to be an alien society, primarily loyal to Muslim countries in the Middle East (countries such as Turkey, Egypt, etc.) rather than to Sri Lanka.

The same source may account for the claim by some commentators that the Muslims made their money by dubious means, selling foodstuffs, for example, at exorbitant prices. This allegation, it has been suggested, emerged during the period of the First World War when, as a result of the scarcity of imports, the prices of commodities had soared. Muslim traders were thus obliged to increase their prices above the pre-war levels.⁷² The Colombo municipality attempted to control this by issuing an official price-list each week to ensure that consumers might purchase necessities at a fixed price.⁷³ Yet it is interesting (and perhaps revealing) to note that the Indian Tamil population, 80% of whom were labourers, often with salaries lower than their Sinhalese counterparts; made no complaint about the methods of Muslim traders.⁷⁴

Religious differences, too, do seem to have played a part. During the communal unrest of 1915, many Buddhist priests became involved. They were even held by some commentators to be responsible, for example, for spreading certain rumours against the Muslims.⁷⁵ One such persistent rumour in Kandy was that the Muslims were approaching - with the intention of attacking - the Dalada Maligava (Temple of the Tooth). Sinhalese laymen were also said to spread similar rumours, suggesting that large numbers of Muslims were about to attack buildings, Buddhist temples and Sinhalese houses.⁷⁶ Yet the evident fact was, on the contrary, that it was Buddhists who were responsible for attacking Muslim houses, mosques and

69. Sarasavi Sandaresa, 6 Feb., 1915.

70. *Sinhala Buddhaya*, 3 June, 1915 and 15 July, 1922.

71. See the chapter on Muslim trade.

72. *Sinhala Buddhaya*, 3 June, 1915.

73. Jayasekera, P.V.J., "Social and Political Changes in Ceylon 1900-1919 with Special Reference to the Disturbances of 1915" (unpublished Ph.D. University of London, 1970), pp. 337-38.

74. *Ibid.*

75. *Sinhala Buddhaya*, 7 June, 1915.

76. *Dinamina*, 9 June, 1915

other buildings, killing, in the process, many Muslim men, women and children.

On May 29th, 1915, for example, the mosque at Gatembe, situated on the Feradeniya road in Kandy, was burned to the ground.⁷⁷ Other mosques at Kachchiwatte in Galle and Kochchika in Colombo were also attacked, reputedly by Buddhists and Catholics respectively. At Handala, Negombo and Kochchikade, it was Catholics who were reported as taking the lead in the riots.⁷⁸ Even some Tamils, however, looted Muslim properties.⁷⁹

The Malay community was not attacked by the Buddhists during these troubles. Nor were the Boroah rice stores and textile shops harmed by the Sinhalese mobs.⁸⁰ This seems to illustrate the fact that the focus of the troubles was not primarily religious, but was a community feud between Moors and Sinhalese.

The Inspector-General of Police's confidential report to the Governor, alleging that the Temperance Movement had played a prominent role in the troubles of 1915, led to Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan calling for Dowbiggin to be dismissed from the Service. He was accused of inefficiency in the handling of the riots. He was asked, "in the interests of good government," to resign. He did not oblige.⁸¹

Some historians believe that members of the Temperance Movement did not take an active part in these troubles.⁸² But some evidence exists to show that temperance Societies did actively harass Muslims in places such as Akuressa, Kumburupitya and Weligama.⁸³

These areas were predominantly populated by low country Sinhalese supporters of the Temperance Movement, who had even gone so far as to call upon Sinhalese traders and societies to boycott Muslim shops.⁸⁴

77. C.O. 54/782, Governor to Secretary of State, 1 July, 1915

78. Jayasekera, P.V.J., "Social and Political Change in Ceylon 1900-1919 with Special Reference to the Disturbances of 1915" (unpublished Ph.D. University of London, 1970) p. 293.

79. *Ceylon Independent*, 30 June, 1915.

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Hansard*, (Legislative Council), 24 Oct., 1917.

82. Jayasekera, P.V.J., "Social and Political Change in Ceylon 1900-1919 with Special Reference to the Disturbances of 1915" (unpublished Ph.D. University of London, 1970) pp. 360-61.

83. C.O. 54/783, (39834) Report on the disturbances in Matara district.

84. *Sarasavi Sandaresa*, 26 Feb., 1915.

Other historians argue that the mobs which attacked Muslim shops and houses in Colombo were drawn principally from the working class in what was a proletarian movement. Because these people were poor and the food prices in Colombo high, their hunger drove them to riot against those Muslim traders who were exploiting them.⁸⁵ While the mobs may, indeed, have contained members of the working class, the bulk of the people who were held to have instigated the troubles were not. They came not from one class but several, being farmers, traders, washermen, etc.⁸⁶

P.T.M. Fernando has accused the British government of high-handedness in suppressing the riots and has suggested that the government should have acted with greater caution.⁸⁷ During these troubles many people were harassed and flogged, without trial or even accusation. Rumours were flying about to the effect that many were being executed without trial.⁸⁸ But it must be allowed that the British government had few choices in trying to control the troubles. The government had no experience of such extensive communal violence and had not expected such troubles to spread throughout the country. It was forced to declare a state of emergency and severely punish people heavily involved in the unrest in an attempt to guard against further disintegration of law and order in the country.

Contrary to Fernando's view, Muslims in Colombo complained that the police there took no action to deal with the violence. But his view finds support with one relatively impartial witness, the Malay leader M.T. Akbar, who also criticized the British authorities. He felt, "the English Government backed them (Muslims) too strongly and it threw the other groups into one solid mass."⁸⁹

In an attempt to have Sinhalese leaders released from jail, the Christian Sinhalese leader, E.W. Perera, made use of British newspapers to call for support. He was remarkably successful. Newspapers and journals, such as *The Manchester Guardian* and *The New Statesman*, were contacted, and all wrote sympathetically about the plight of the Sinhalese people at the hands of the local government, but not about the plight of the Muslims at the hands of the Sinhalese.⁹⁰

85. Jayawardena, Kumari, "Economic and Political Factors in 1915 Riots", *J.A.S.*, vol. XXXIX, no. 2, Feb. 1970, pp. 227-28.

86. *Ceylon Morning Leader*, 8 July, 1915.

87. Fernando, P.T.M., "The Post Riots Campaign for Justice", *J.A.S.*, vol. XXXIX, no.2, Feb. 1970, p.256.

88. *Ibid.*

89. *Ceylon Independent*, 8 Jan., 1928.

90. *Manchester Guardian*, 11 Feb., 1916; *The New Statesman*, 11 May, 1916.

From the evidence now available, it seems that there were several principal causes of the riots. Buddhist revivalism had been particularly strong before 1915 and Buddhist frustration at their lack of power particularly marked. 1915 was the centenary year of the Kandyan convention, which was now interpreted as giving a full guarantee of the primacy of Buddhism for the future of the whole of Sri Lanka.⁹¹ Muslim claims offended such Buddhist revivalist thinking.

Secondly, the low country Sinhalese had become commercial rivals of the Muslims and wished greater control over trade in Sri Lanka. Thirdly, politically active western-education Sinhalese Buddhists were aware of the need to foster community consciousness and of the need to promote Sinhalese rights, over the rights of other groups. This the Muslims resented.⁹² Fourthly, those lower and middle-class Buddhists who were followers of Dharmapala had embraced racial views which branded Muslims as aliens. They saw Muslims as threatening or destroying nativist Buddhist customs. Their main target was the promoting of liquor. But Islam too was suspect. The censorious attitude at Temperance meetings was usually directed against what they regarded as alien influences supposedly perverting their own culture.⁹³

Muslims, too, were presented as "foreign". At Gampola, the sings of trouble were numerous. Articles in the vernacular press denounced Islam. Meetings were announced from which Muslims were excluded. A series of bizarre and disturbing rumours and warnings surfaced about Muslim plans to interfere with the Vesak procession.⁹⁴ All these seem to have contributed to a mood of crisis.

Lastly, Tamil Hindu leaders, like Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, chose for whatever reason to side wholly with the Sinhalese and to suggest that Muslims were entirely at fault. Yet even the Sinhalese leaders were to admit, ultimately, that the Muslim community had been done a great injustice during the communal troubles. After the riots of 1915, a public meeting was held which protested against the harsh measures meted out to the Muslims by the Sinhalese. At this meeting Sir James Pieris remarked:

Just as we are met here to ask for justice to our race, we should see that justice is done to the Moors. I take it that you all agree that the

91. S.L.N.A., no. 62/229, "Confidential Report by I.G.P. Dowbiggin", August, 1915.

92. S.L.N.A., no.62/229, "Confidential Report by I.G.P. Dowbiggin", August, 1915.

93. *Ibid.*

94. *Dinamina*, 10 Oct., 1915.

greatest wrong had been done to the Moorish community. Their property has been destroyed and a great injury done to them; they must be compensated.⁹⁵

A.E. Goonesinha, one of the nationalists arrested following the riots, was also aware of this. He proposed a day of mourning for the dead, both Sinhalese and Muslims.⁹⁶ Even so, there were those Sinhalese who spoke unrepentently of the attacks made against the Muslims in 1915.⁹⁷

95. *Dinamina*, 10 Oct., 1915.
 96. Goonesinha, A.E., "My Life and Labour", *Ceylon Observer*, 25 July., 1965 p. 5.
 97. *Dinamina*, 10 Oct., 1915.

5 MUSLIMS AND POLITICS

1. Muslims and Politics under British Rule

Muslims were represented in both the Central Legislative Council and in the Local Municipal Councils. These bodies were created to give representation to the peoples of the island. The formation of the Legislative Council in 1833 provided the first form of all-island political representation for Sri Lankans. The Municipal Councils had the less ambitious scope and function of looking after local affairs in their respective areas.

Although the Legislative Council was created in 1833¹, no Muslim was appointed as a representative until 1899; all the early Muslim members from then until 1924 were nominated, not elected.² Some Muslims did stand for election, but they were unable to win a seat. As Muslims were regarded as a significant minority group, however, a number of them in these years continued to be nominated to places on the Council by the Governor. The nominated members from 1899 to 1924 were all from the elite, mainly gem merchants and by and large loyal supporters of the British government.³ The only non-mercantile figure was Mr. N.H.M. Abdul Cader.

In 1924, Muslims were accorded five seats in the Legislative Council, two to be filled by election from a communal electorate. One of the first Muslim members to be elected was T.B. Jayah. He was neither from the elite nor a gem merchant. He was a teacher by profession. The other was Sir Mohamed Macan Markar. He, like earlier nominated members, was from the elite and also conformed to type in being a gem merchant. Yet, although they came from very different backgrounds, both were elected in 1924 as all-island Muslim representatives to the Legislative Council. Presumably the Muslim electorate appreciated both the claims of wealth and business skill, in the one case, and professional competence and intellectual eminence, in the other.

1. C.O. 54/74, House of Commons, Accounts and Papers, 1833, vol. XXVI, no.698, p.142.
 2. See Table III.
 3. Hazari, H.J., "Some observations on the Muslims of Ceylon", *C.M.R.*, Oct. 1914, pp. 23-25.

From 1899 to 1915 only one nominated post was assigned to a Muslim representative on the Legislative Council. This representation was then increased by one further nominated posts in 1915 and then by one nominated and two elected posts in 1924. According to the Secretary of State in 1889, Muslims then merited only one post as this was all that their small proportion of the population warranted.⁴ By 1924, however, their numbers had grown and their representation had also been increased.

Although the Muslim community was made up of different groups, locally described as different races, Sri Lanka Moor, Malay and Bohora, the members appointed to the Council were exclusively from the Sri Lanka Moor community. The British government in Sri Lanka claimed not to differentiate between these three groups, even if their appointments were always from the majority group, the Moors. Once elections were introduced, however, the Muslim electors proved to be more broad-minded. They selected, amongst others, T.B. Jayah, who was from the Malay community. When the Muslims first entered the Legislative Council, they concentrated on purely community issues. In the 1900s, however, Muslim members started to criticize government expenditure and later moved on to take an interest in such matters as education.

2. The Formation of the Legislative Council

One important feature of the Legislative Council was that, though it long retained an "official" or Civil Service majority, it also required the presence of "Unofficial" members. This served to give validity to the idea that the essential purpose of establishing this Legislative body had been to give representation to the inhabitants of the dependency.

From the very beginning, the unofficial members of the Legislative Council, and even some of the local newspapers of the day, tended to regard the Council as a local parliament. Initially, the unofficial representatives were appointed by the Governor on a communal basis. This seemed to the rulers both natural and desirable, as their major role on the Council was to provide information pertaining to local conditions. The ratio at first became fixed by convention at three European members to one each from the Sinhalese, Tamil and Burgher communities. On several occasions after 1833, there was some agitation on the part of the local Sinhalese and Tamil elites to turn the Legislative Council into a more genuinely representative body; and gradually over this period the Council's powers were in fact, enlarged.⁵

4. S.L.N.A., no. 13/15, Secretary of State's despatch, no. 48, 29 Oct., 1889.

5. Wight, M., *The Development of the Legislative Council, 1606-1945* (Lond. 1946), p. 14. See also de Silva, K.M., *A History of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi, 1981), pp. 263 and 357.

3. Ramanathan and Muslim Ethnicity

In October 1889, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, a leading Tamil, was appointed to the Legislative Council as an unofficial representative.⁶ In 1888, in an article entitled "The Ethnology of the Moors of Ceylon",⁷ he tried to prove, for the benefit of his readers generally and of the Imperial Government in particular, that the Muslims required no separate representation as they were part of what he called "the Hindu community".

In his article, Ramanathan concluded that the Muslims of Sri Lanka were ethnologically Tamils, principally on the grounds that they spoke Tamil and also because, in his view, historical evidence existed which showed that the Muslims had all come originally from Tamil Nadu, and in particular from such places as Kayal Pattnam.

His thesis is open to challenge. The evidence he adduced does not prove that the two communities were one and the same. If there were common elements between the Muslims and Tamils of Sri Lanka, there were also important differences in culture, history, language and religion. Some years later Ramanathan was strongly attacked for his views by Mr. I.L.M. Abdul Azeez.⁸ Azeez did not deny that there were, indeed, cultural similarities between Tamils and Muslims; but in his opinion this could be explained in terms of the inevitable result of the acculturation of a minority group to the dominant element in local society.⁹

The use of Tamil as the everyday language of the Muslim community could, similarly, be explained. Tamil was the lingua franca of commerce in the Indian Ocean at the time that Arab traders made their entry into the area; and thus it may well have been adopted for obvious reasons of convenience.¹⁰ But this did not mean that Arabic was forgotten; the importance with which it was still viewed by Sri Lankan Muslims was reflected in the place they continued to give it in their educational system.¹¹

As for the supposed physical resemblance that Muslims bore to the Tamils, a point emphasized in Ramanathan's analysis of their ethnicity, this was fervently discounted and, instead, the "Arab" profile of the members of this community was strongly asserted. Even Azeez could not deny that there

6. S.L.N.A., no. 14/16, Secretary of State's despatch no. 49, 7 Oct., 1889.

7. Ramanathan, P., "The Ethnology of the Moors of Ceylon", *J.R.A.S. (C.B.)* (Ceylon), vol. X, no. 36, 1888, p. 262.

8. Abdul Azeez, I.L.M., *Ethnology of the 'Moors' of Ceylon* (Colombo, 1907), p. 22.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

10. Hardy, P., *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 8.

11. Abdul Azeez, I.L.M., *Ethnology of the 'Moors' of Ceylon* (Colombo, 1907), p. 48.

was a mixture of Arab and Tamil blood in the Muslim community. It was, in fact, even admitted that some of the original Arab traders had taken Tamil women as their partners when they settled in South India, something which was thought quite inevitable, given their circumstances.¹² Nonetheless, it was asserted that this factor alone could and should not obscure the fact that the true origins of the community were to be traced back to the Arab traders.¹³

Though claiming in his article a blood relationship with them, Ramanathan was not known later for his love of Muslims. For example, when the troubles of 1915 between the Sinhalese and Muslim communities broke out, Ramanathan took up the cause of the Sinhalese and wrote of "..... the intolerance and aggressiveness of a small section of the Muhammedans, known to the Sinhalese as 'Hampayas' (boatmen). The Hampayas are the Muhammedan immigrants from the east coast of South India."¹⁴ Even if this exonerated the bulk of Muslims, it was a curious comment to make in the light of later evidence.

Ramanathan, in writing his paper on the "Ethnology of the moors of Ceylon", was equally at odds with Muslim political pretensions. Having himself obtained membership as a Tamil on the Legislative Council, he was now seeking to dissuade the British government from appointing a separate Muslim member to the Council.¹⁵ But he was still prepared a little later to castigate a section of the Muslims as immigrant boatmen, when his personal interests were better served by that approach. Ramanathan, of course, had been thwarted on the first point; a Muslim appointment to the Legislative Council was made in 1889, explicitly in fairness to the Muslims as "a minority community".

The Muslim community already had representatives on the Municipal Councils and on other local bodies. But, in the 1880s, the Muslims, along with the Kandyan Sinhalese, began to agitate for membership of the Legislative Council. Muslim activists were quite clearly no longer willing to acquiesce in the arrangements which had subsumed them under the Tamils in the all-island political arena. The upshot was that, despite Ramanathan, in 1889 the Governor made provision for two new members on the Legislative Council, one from the Kandyan and one from the Muslim community.¹⁶

12. Abdul Azeez, I.L.M., *Ethnology of the 'Moors' of Ceylon* (Colombo, 1907) pp. 42-47.

13. Sir Alexander Johnstone to Secretary of State, 3 Feb., 1827, *J.R.A.S. (C.B.)*, vol. I, 1827, p.537.

14. Ramanathan, P., *Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon*, 1915, (Lond. 1916), p.1.

15. Abdul Azeez, I.L.M., *Ethnology of the 'Moors' of Ceylon* (Colombo, 1907), pp. 47-48.

16. S.L.N.A., no. 13/15, Secretary of State to the Governor, 29 Oct., 1899. For Muslim members, see Table III.

TABLE III
MUSLIM MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE/STATE COUNCILS

	Names of council members	Date when nominated	Date of membership/ elected to the council	Elected/ nominated termination
1.	Hon. M.C. Abdul Rahman	29th Oct. 1889 ¹	1899 ²	Nominated
2.	Hon. Ahmadu Lebbe Muhammad Sheriff	18th July, 1899 ³	1900 ⁴	Nominated
3.	Hon. W.M. Abdul Rahman	22nd Sept. 1900 ⁵	1935 ⁶	Nominated
4.	Hon. N.H.M. Abdul Cader	25th Sept. 1915 ⁷	1931 ⁸	Nominated
5.	Hon. S.R. Muhammad Sultan	2nd May, 1924 ⁹	1927 ¹⁰	Nominated
6.	Hon. M.T. Akabr	2nd May, 1924 ¹¹	1927 ¹²	Nominated to the Legislative Council
7.	Hon. T.B. Jayah	1924 ¹³	1930 ¹⁴	Elected to the Legislative Council
8.	Sir Muhammad Macan Markar	1924 ¹⁵	1936 ¹⁶	Elected member for Legislative Council and then to State Council (Nominated)
9.	Hon. M.K. Saldin	10 March, 1931 ¹⁷	1933 ¹⁸	Nominated member for State Council
10.	Sir A. Razik Fareed	10 April 1936 ¹⁹	1968 ²⁰	Nominated to State Council Elected to the Parliament

Hon. = Honourable.

1. S.L.N.A., no. 13/15, Secretary of State's despatch no. 48, of 29 Oct., 1889.

2. C.B.B., 1900, (Colombo, 1901), p. J.4.

3. S.L.N.A., no. 2/17, Secretary of State's despatch no. 48, of 18 July, 1899.

4. C.B.B., 1900, (Colombo, 1901), p. J.4.

5. S.L.N.A., no. 12/21, Secretary of State's despatch no. 58, of 22 Sept., 1900.

6. C.B.B., 1935, (Colombo, 1936), p. J.4.
7. S.L.N.A., no. 11/18, Secretary of State's despatch no. 25 of 25 Sept., 1915.
8. C.B.B., 1931, (Colombo, 1932), p. J.4.
9. S.L.N.A., no. 12/19, Secretary of State's despatch no. 48, of 2 May, 1924.
10. C.B.B., 1927, (Colombo, 1928), p. J.4.
11. S.L.N.A., no., 1/177, Secretary of State's despatch no. 49, 2 May, 1924.
12. C.B.B., 1927, (Colombo, 1928), p. J.4.
13. C.B.B., 1924, (Colombo, 1925), p. J.4.
14. C.B.B., 1930, (Colombo, 1931), p. J.4.
15. C.B.B., 1924, (Colombo, 1925), p. J.4.
16. C.B.B., 1936, (Colombo, 1937), p. J.4.
17. S.L.N.A., no. 2/185, Secretary of State's despatch no. 42, 10 March, 1931.
18. C.B.B., 1933, (Colombo, 1934), p. J.4.
19. S.L.N.A., no., 2/197, Secretary of State's despatch no. 47, 10 April, 1936.
20. *Hansard*, (Parliament) vol. III, 1968 (Colombo, 1968) p.3.

4. Muslim Members of the Legislative and State Councils

The four Muslim members nominated by the British to the Legislative Council before 1916 came from amongst the leading English-speaking families. All were from the elite, all were merchants, all conspicuously loyal to the British.

The first Muslim member to be appointed was the Hon. M.C. Abdul Rahman, who held the post from 1889-99. His principal contribution as a representative of the Muslim community was to persuade the Legislative Council of the necessity of including amendments to the Marriage Registration Ordinances no. 8 of 1886 and no. 2 of 1888, in order to ensure that Muslim marriages would also be officially registered. Until then registration was kept only by the priest of the local mosque in what were called kaduttam.¹⁷ Rahman is otherwise little remembered. The second nominee achieved little. The third nominee to be appointed to the Legislative Council, the Hon. W.M. Abdul Rahman (1900-1936), became far better known than his predecessors, and not just in Muslim circles. He belonged to a wealthy family from Colombo and was given an English education at Wesley College in that city. He was a building contractor by profession. His father was Mr. A.M. Wapachcha Marikar, a well-known contractor, responsible for the building of the Colombo Museum. At the opening ceremony in 1877, Wapachcha Marikar made a successful appeal to the Governor that the museum, as a mark of respect to Muslims, be closed on Fridays. The practice has been continued to this day.

His work on the building earned the good opinion of the Governor, and no doubt led later to the appointment of his son to the Legislative

17. Kaduttam is a deed of settlement of dower among Muslims. See Tamil Lexicon, vol. II (Madras, 1926), p. 673.

Council. The Hon. W.M. Abdul Rahman was a creative addition to the Legislative Council. A man with strong views on government expenditure, he was active in several ways. Early in 1909, he opposed the raising of large monetary loans for the Lake Scheme (a scheme to develop the Dutch canals in Sri Lanka), arguing that there was more urgent work, such as road building and improved housing, being thereby kept in abeyance.

But, though often acting on behalf of what he considered the general welfare, Rahman also paid some attention to the particular needs of the Muslim community. For example, on 25th February, 1909, he proposed that the Governor should have the power to appoint deserving individuals to some of the higher posts in Government Service, without their having to undergo competitive examination. He openly admitted that his motion was intended to benefit Muslims and members of other minority groups who had felt that their educational differences meant that they seldom attained higher posts in government service. But the motion was defeated. Outside the Council, he presided at a mass meeting of Muslims protesting in 1912 against the Italian invasion of Tripoli - during this time, of course, Tripoli was ruled by the Turkish sultan.¹⁸

He was also active on parochial Muslim issues. In 1921, when the Hon. N.H.M. Abdul Cader, another Muslim representative, submitted a bill to the Legislative Council proposing the incorporation of a new managing body for the Maradana Mosque in Colombo, Abdul Rahman objected to it. He proposed certain amendments designed to safeguard the interests of those members of the congregation who were permanent residents of the area of the mosque and so to give them a voice in its running.

The bill was then passed in its amended form by the Legislative Council. Rahman feared that if this amendment had not been included in the legislation, outsiders might have started to control the affairs of the mosque and that this would have caused division among the Muslims.

Yet another notable figure from the Muslim community to attain a post on the Legislative Council was the aforementioned Hon. N.H.M. Abdul Cader, who also served as a member of the Colombo Municipal Council for thirty years. He was a lawyer by profession, and a keen supporter of Muslim education. In 1921 he obtained for Zahira College in Colombo a government grant of Rs. 25,000. He is also remembered for the battle he fought in 1921 for the retention of the words "Ceylon Moor" (as opposed to "Muslim") in the

18. *Ceylon Times*, 10 March 1912.

bill he submitted for the creation of a managing body for the Maradana Mosque of Colombo.¹⁹ His intention was to try and ensure that Indian Muslims and Malays were kept out of the management of the mosque. He saw the mosque as a community centre, not just a religious institution, and so wished to preserve its local character.

Justice M.T. Akbar, who was nominated to the Legislative Council on 2nd May, 1924, was a distinguished intellectual. He had graduated from Cambridge University in 1900 with a degree in engineering and subsequently went on to study law, being called to the bar at Gray's Inn in 1904. Whilst on the Legislative Council, he piloted through a resolution to accept a recommendation of the University Commission, of which he had been chairman, that a university campus be established in Kandy. This motion faced strong opposition from such people as Sir James Pieris (a representative of the Sinhalese in the legislature), Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan (Tamil representative) and Mr. G.A. Wille (Burgher representative) who all wished the campus to be situated in Colombo. Akbar envisaged this university as a great centre of learning for the whole of Asia. In subsequent years, when a university was created for Kandy, the university authorities named one of their halls of residence after him. Akbar also made an outstanding contribution to the development of Muslim law in Sri Lanka and played a major part in the creation of new legislation regarding laws of inheritance and waqf (the established Muslim charity fund). He was also responsible for Muslims being allowed to benefit from the widows and orphans pension fund, from which they had hitherto been debarred.

Aware of the educational backwardness of his fellow Muslims, Akbar served for a number of years as a founder member of the Colombo Muslim Educational Society, first established in 1891, and was one of those who helped to start the Hussaini Boys' School and the Fathima Girls' School, both in 1942, which came to be highly regarded by the Muslims of Colombo.

In his capacity as Solicitor-General, he served as an ex-officio member of the Law Committee. This in 1924 put forward in a sessional paper a recommendation that the word "Mohammedan", a word used by the British, be changed in all legislation to "Muslim". The committee was unanimously of the opinion that the word "Mohammedan", in whatever form it might be spelled, was incorrect.

19. *N.L.R.*, 1921 no. 240, 2nd schedule, "Maradana Mosque Act of 1921" (Colombo, 1922).

Instead it advocated that the word "Muslim" be used to designate "a person professing the religion of Islam."²⁰ The amendment, which displayed greater sensitivity to local feeling, was endorsed.

Another Muslim political figure who made his mark on local politics was the Hon. T.B. Jayah. In his early days, he passed the London University B.A. examination. Later he took to politics and was elected in 1924 as third member of the all-island Muslim representatives in the Legislative Council. There were then six Muslim members in all. He was an appointed member of the State Council from 1936 to 1945 and subsequently, in 1947, was elected to the first independent Parliament as second member for the Colombo Central constituency. He became Minister of Labour in the Hon. D.S. Senanayake's Cabinet in 1947.

Once the State Council was formed in 1931, the Muslim members of the old Legislative Council became members of the State Council. They were appointed as nominated members by the Governor, as it was thought - correctly - that Muslims were unlikely to win in open elections a number of seats commensurate with their numbers in the population, since communal electorates were now abolished.²¹

What contribution did these Muslim representatives make in general to the Legislative Council? For all their concern with the Muslim community, Muslim members of the Legislative and State Councils were most characterised by their marked loyalty to the British government. It was only, they felt, with the help of the Imperial government that they could benefit their community, especially in the fields of law, education and trade. But although they were keen supporters of British rule and although they did not always agree with the majority Sinhalese leaders, these Muslims were not without nationalist sentiment themselves and this was sometimes recognised quite widely. It is true that Muslims were handicapped by being scattered all around the country. Only a few concentrated Muslim settlements existed in the coastal towns, such as Mannar, Puttalam, Colombo, Beruwala, Galle and Batticaloa. But after 1931 they did sometimes stand as candidates in these regions, both in Sinhalese and Tamil dominated areas, and, even if more often defeated, they were sometimes elected. This may show that even the majority communities felt some sympathy toward the Muslims, and

20. Ordinance no. 27 of 1929, the first enactment in which the correct expressions "Islam" and "Muslim" are used, followed the recommendation made by a committee composed of M.T. Akbar (Solicitor-General, Chairman), Hon. N.H.M. Abdul Cader, Hon. H.M. Macan Markar, Hon. T.B. Jayah and Hon. S.R. Mohamed Sultan whose reports were published as *C.S.P. no. XXXV, 1924* (Colombo, 1924), "Muslim".

21. Jayah, T.B. "Muslim of Ceylon", *Pakistan Quarterly*, vol. I, (Pakistan, 1951).

that what Muslims really sought was a balance between the interests of the Imperial government and the interests of the local communities.

5. Muslim Membership of the Municipal Councils

During the governorship of Sir Hercules Robinson (1865-72), the Municipal Councils of Colombo, Kandy and Galle were established by Ordinance No. 17 of 1866 and No. 27 of 1867.²² The establishment of these councils marks a further stage in the development of the process of political representation in Sri Lanka which began with the publication of the Colebrooke-Cameron reports.

The Imperial Government had decided to delegate some powers pertaining to the day-to-day running of local matters to Municipal Councils. The main administrative duties were to consist of superintending housing, making civic improvements, collecting corporation rents and raising annual taxes.²³ Almost from the beginning, the Muslims of Colombo, Galle and Kandy took part in the local politics of their respective areas. Eventually, some Muslim members were elected and others were nominated to these councils.

Muslim representation on the Municipal Councils began in 1866, long before their representation on the Legislative Council. But although the Colombo Municipal Council Ordinance was passed in 1866 and elections were held in the same year, and although a large number of Muslims lived in the capital, their first representative on the Municipal Council was not an elected member but a member nominated by the Governor. Muslims first stood for election in local politics only in 1886. Mr. M.L.M. Zainudeen was then elected from the Maligawatta ward, in which a large number of Muslims lived. Between 1866 and 1885, Muslims seem to have taken only a minor part in local politics, although at this time they were very active in trade.

After 1885, they were more active politically. The powers of these council members were limited and their role was initially slight. Muslim members of the councils seem to have been mainly interested in obtaining licences to open business premises. Some, however, were also involved in allocating council houses and flats to the people of their respective areas. Others took a keen interest in civic improvements in their wards, for example in the establishment of children's parks, swimming pools, new housing, and the distribution of water to houses and flats. If the interests of Muslims on

22. *C.B.B.*, 1866 (Colombo, 1867), p.156 and *C.B.B.*, 1867 (Colombo, 1868), p. 156.

23. *C.B.B.*, 1866 (Colombo, 1867), p. 156.

the Legislative Council tended often to be narrowly communal, those who sat on the Municipal Councils can sometimes be considered even more distinctly parish pump politicians.

Their backgrounds cause no surprises. Of those who served on the Colombo Municipal Council between 1886 and 1937, two were lawyers, Mr. N.H.M. Abdul Cader and Justice M.T. Akbar; the others were all businessmen. Four members were nominated by the Colonial government in this period, nine were elected and one appointed *ex-officio*. The nominated Muslim members were all chosen as representatives of the whole Muslim community of the area.

The first Muslim member of the Colombo Municipal Council, Mr. Mass Sodma Jayah Akbar, was nominated on 4th May, 1866. Although he was from the Malay community, he, too, of course, was appointed as a representative of the whole Muslim community. He is now little remembered. The second nominee, Mr. Mohamed Ismail, has left even less of an impression. Indeed few of the total were very distinguished.

Two of the inter-war appointments did excite a little interest. These were those of Mr. Adamjee Lukemanjee and Mamujee, both of whom were nominated as a result of agitation by the members of the Bohora community.²⁴ But they, too, as council members, were said to have mainly helped their own Bohora and Moor communities, for example by securing licences for their business premises in Colombo. Justice M.T. Akbar's appointment was also particular in that he was nominated to the Colombo Municipal Council *ex officio*. He was Solicitor-General at a time when holders of that office automatically were accorded a seat in the Colombo Municipal Council.

Of the elected members, Mr. Peston Khan and H.K. Khan were elected from the Slave Island ward in 1904. Abdul Cader was elected from the Pattah ward in 1908. Sir Razick Fareed was elected from the Maradana ward in 1932. These were all areas with large Muslim populations. The other elected members, however, were all chosen by wards in which Muslims constituted only a small minority of the electorate.

Of the Muslim members of the Kandy Municipal Council between 1865 and 1940, (see Appendix IV) only the first, Mr. M.C. Siddi Lebbe, was nominated, the rest were elected. Mr. Siddi Lebbe came from a dis-

24. Bohora was a Muslim group from western India, mainly of Hindu descent, and for the most part from the Shi' sect. They came to Sri Lanka in the early period of British rule: for the details, see, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. I (Brill, 1913), p.138.

tinguished Moor family of Kandy. He qualified as a proctor (solicitor) of the District Court, Kandy, in 1862. Two years later he became a proctor of the Supreme Court in Colombo. His chief claim to fame was his proposal in 1891 of a scheme for improving Muslim education in Sri Lanka. This resulted in the establishment of Zahira College, Colombo, patronised by the cream of the Muslim community and supported by the munificence of Wapachcha Marikar. But Siddi Lebbe also managed and financed several girls' schools in the Central Province of Sri Lanka, for example in Gampola. He also founded a girls' school in Kandy. To provide a further service to the Muslim community, he started a weekly journal called "The Muslim Friend".

Although the Kandy municipal area was predominantly Sinhalese, it is clear that a number of Muslims stood for election there and won places, even if rarely and only intermittently, on the Council. It is also interesting to note that although a severe outbreak of anti-Muslim communal violence occurred in Kandy in 1915, this could not have been an adverse reflection on Muslim power in local government, as at that time there were no Muslim members on the Council. But, over the period as a whole, Muslims did continue to participate and, even as late as 1937, they occupied a greater proportion of seats on the Kandy Council than their population figures warranted.

The Galle Municipal Council (see Appendix III) was established in 1867. Muslim members first entered that Council in 1882, and there the first Muslim member was an elected representative. Although Galle is, overall, predominantly a Sinhalese area, there were certain pockets, such as Galle Fort, which were predominantly Muslim. From 1906 onwards, a few Muslims were nominated as members, generally gem merchants from the English educated elite, consciously loyal to the British government. Among them was Macan Markar. Interestingly, the elected members were neither gem merchants nor from the elite, but were shop-keepers and petty traders.

Even in Galle, although their proportion of elected members dipped below their proportion of the electorate in 1901, 1903, 1911, 1914, 1917, 1920, 1923, 1926, 1930 and 1934, Muslims still performed well, and in 1937 they were again over-represented in relation to their voting strength.

The evidence from these three Municipal Councils strongly suggests active Muslim participation in local politics. In Colombo, for example, in 1885, when they constituted only 6.79% of the city's population,²⁵ Muslims fielded four candidates (that is over 15% of those standing). In 1900, they

25. C.B.B., 1886 (Colombo, 1867), p.207.

fielded three (25%) and in 1904 three (over 21%). From 1908 until 1920, they fielded seven candidates (constituting between 16.6% and 21.9% of the total). Their number of candidates fell in the 1920s, but recovered again in the thirties and forties, reaching 20% of the total in 1940.²⁶

Not only did they participate out of proportion to their numbers, they were also able to win selection. If we aggregate the figures in Colombo for seats won at the elections, Muslims constituted only 8.51% of voters in 1900 to 1912 but won 20% of the seats; only 9.76% of voters in 1916 to 1928 but won 13.4% of the seats; and only 2.64% of voters in 1932 to 1944 but won 10.81% of these seats.

Even with the percentage of Sinhalese in the electorate of the city rising astronomically - to reach 97.91% by 1944 - Muslims held on to their seats in the Council. Between 1940 and 1944 Muslims fell as a proportion of the Colombo electorate from 8.71% to 1.02%, but their percentage of the elected members actually rose from 10.53% to 15.79%.

The picture in the other councils is not strikingly different. In Kandy, taking only the elections where they won seats, in 1902, 1923 and 1927, Muslims fielded 14 candidates in all, 23.6% of the total and yet they constituted on average only 8.16% of the electorate in these years.²⁷

In Galle Muslims supplied 21.5% of the candidates between 1882 and 1903 though only 9.6% of the electorate and they won 13.4% of the elected representatives. They fielded many fewer candidates and won no seats at all between 1906 and 1914, yet again featured prominently as candidates from 1917 to 1926 (with no better luck in terms of seats), before emerging in the 1930s with 29.7% of the candidates, 13.8% of the voters and 7.4% of the seats.²⁸ If this was a disappointing showing, it was by no means discreditable.

It is harder to be sure about percentages of voters in the population as a whole. Not everyone had the vote, of course, until 1931. Before that date, voters had to have certain qualifications. They had to be not less than 21 years of age, male British subjects, able to read and write in English, Tamil or Sinhalese; they also had to possess an income of not less than Rs. 600 or immovable property valued at not less than Rs. 1,500, or they had to occupy premises of not less than Rs. 400 annual value in town and not

26. See Appendix VI.

27. See Appendix VIII.

28. See Appendix XI.

less than Rs. 200 annual value elsewhere.²⁹

Their presence in such a high proportion amongst the voters must reflect the fact that Muslims were increasingly an urbanised community and that they were for a time relatively prosperous.

The Muslim population of Colombo went up by nearly 154% between 1885 and 1944, that of Kandy by 195% and that of Galle by 296% in the same period. The prosperity of these urbanised Muslims is evident from the fact that they constituted a higher percentage of the voters than of the general population in Colombo up to the Second World War. In Kandy and Galle, by the same measurement, they remained relatively prosperous even in the mid-1940s. Indeed, if their percentage of the voting roll is a valid test, they actually became increasingly prosperous in all three cities between the 1880s and the 1920s.³⁰

29. *C.B.B.*, 1885 (Colombo, 1886). See the section on "Political Franchise".

30. After 1931 there were of course, no wealth qualifications, but not everyone registered for the vote.

6 ISLAM AND NATIONALISM IN SRI LANKA DURING BRITISH RULE

1. Muslim Leaders and the Early Nationalist Movement

In the twentieth century, two Commissions, the Donoughmore Commission and the Soulbury Commission, were set up by the British Government to propose changes in the Constitution of Sri Lanka. The Muslim community was deeply involved in both these enquiries and in their outcomes.

In 1919 the Ceylon National Congress had been formed with the ultimate objective of securing for Sri Lanka responsible government and the status of a self-governing member state of the British Empire.¹ From this organisation the Muslims had stood aloof, being apparently somewhat apprehensive of its aims.

In particular, the formation of the National Congress roused Muslim fears of Sinhalese domination, the memories of 1915 being no doubt still fresh in their minds. The Temperance Movement was one of the influences behind this newly formed Congress and that movement had been openly accused, even by the British authorities, of having taken a leading part in fomenting the 1915 Muslim-Sinhalese communal troubles.²

This was also the time when the political prestige of the Tamil leaders was at its height. Twice, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan had been elected in preference to a Sinhalese rival by the 'educated Ceylonese electorate'. His first victory, in 1911, had been over the formidable Dr. Marcus Fernando (later Sir Marcus), in a tightly fought campaign, the first popular election campaign to take place in Sri Lanka. Then, in 1917, he won his second victory over a Sinhalese opponent, when Mr. E.W. Perera suffered a humiliating defeat.

1. *Ceylon Morning Leader*, 12 Dec. 1919.

2. *S.L.N.A.*, no. 62/229, Confidential Report by I.G.B. Dowbiggin, August 1915.

What most helped to determine the Muslim response was the leadership which was decided upon at the first meeting of the Ceylon National Congress in 1917. This was devised by Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan's equally distinguished brother, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, whose status within the party was readily acknowledged and accepted by the Sinhalese leaders of the day. All the leading Muslim political spokesmen raised their voices against his choice of leaders. The Hon. W.M. Abdul Rahman (who was serving as a member of the Legislative Council), the Hon. N.H.M. Abdul Cader (who also served on the Legislative Council) and Sir Mohamed Macan Markar (who served from 1924 to 1931), all made known their opposition.³ None of these men was prepared to join the National Congress and all were critical of the prominence within Congress of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan. They remembered that whilst on the Legislative Council Ramanathan had supported the Sinhalese in the aftermath of the Muslim-Sinhalese conflicts of 1915.⁴

However, when Sinhalese-Tamil unity broke down in 1921, over the Tamil's refusal to relinquish their claim to a special reserved seat in the Legislative Council for the Western Province, the picture altered.⁵ A conflict arose between the Sinhalese and the minorities. The Muslims had initially wanted a Muslim electorate in the Western Province while the Tamils thought they should be represented by a Tamil electorate. But when the Sinhalese leadership wanted neither community to have such representation, Tamils and Muslims moved closer together. This was to be reflected in the campaigns mounted after November 13th, 1927, when the Donoughmore Commission arrived on the island.⁶

The arrival of the Donoughmore Commission had the immediate effect of exacerbating communal and political rivalries on the island. Both groups and individuals made many rival claims and demands for special representation, in the hope of influencing the work of the Commission and the recommendations it would make as to the future politico-constitutional structure of the island. Universal suffrage, for example, became an important and divisive issue in the island's politics. But there the minority communities found the prospect of universal suffrage no more unpalatable than did those Sinhalese leaders who made a public stand against it.⁷

3. See Appendix V.

4. Ramanathan, P., *Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon* (Lond., 1916), pp. 51-58.

5. *Ceylon Times*, 15 Nov., 1921.

6. *Ceylon Report of the Special Commission on the Constitution* (Lond., 1928), p.3. (Hereinafter, Donoughmore Report).

7. *Ceylon Independent*, 4 Jan., 1928.

When the Donoughmore Commission arrived on the island, various "Moor" and "Malay" organisations were mushrooming to compete for the political status of being the Muslim voice on the island.⁸ There were two major Muslim organisations in the country; the Young Muslim League, under the leadership of T.B. Jayah, and the Muslim Social Union, under the leadership of N.H.M. Abdul Cader. Both organisations had the same political motives, namely to promote "a broad fellowship among the members of the Muslim Community, to foster the natural ties which exist between one Muslim and another, and to make each one conscious of his duty to his fellow Muslims."⁹ Their differences related entirely to the separate ethnic identities of their leaders, the Muslim Social Union being Moor and the Young Muslim League largely Malay.

2. Communalism Within the Muslim Community

Divisions among the Muslims were compounded by the earlier communal troubles between Muslims and Sinhalese which had complicated Muslim responses to the majority community enormously. As Sir Hugh Clifford put it:

There can, I fear, be no doubt that the racial antagonism which was at that time engendered between the Sinhalese and the Moors still lingers, especially among the more ignorant sections of the former. Outwardly peace has been completely restored, but I am informed, on what I believe to be reliable authority, that rich Moors are not infrequently insulted when they visit outlying parts of the country, and that many of their leaders are apprehensive concerning the general attitude of the Sinhalese villagers towards them. They look to the Government for protection, but, at the same time, are anxious to conciliate Sinhalese opinion.¹⁰

The Muslims of Sri Lanka now considered themselves a separate minority (or separate minorities) in the country, although they generally lived in close proximity to the Tamils and Sinhalese. As T.B. Jayah put it:

The riots forced the Muslims into a cocoon mentality.¹¹

At the time of the arrival of the Donoughmore Commission in Sri Lanka, "Moors" and "Malays" were terms used to identify different groups

8. *Donoughmore Report*, p.14.

9. *Ceylon Independent*, 7 Feb., 1927. There were other minor Muslim organisations on the island, see, *Donoughmore Report*, Appendix II.

10. C.O. 337/692, Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 Nov., 1926.

11. C.O.54/900, T.B. Jayah to the Secretary of State, 27 Mar., 1930.

within the Muslim community. Their differences were widely recognised. Sri Lankan Moors were mainly engaged in commerce or in agriculture; Malays were more likely to be in the police force or in the government clerical service.¹² The Sri Lankan Moors believed that they were the descendants of the original Arab settlers. The Malays believed they originated in Java. The Malays argued that there were also differences in religious practice: most mosques on the island were controlled exclusively by one or the other group, though, in fact, the Malays often also used Moor mosques. The Malays tended to be liberal in politics, but the Moors were more known for their political conservatism.¹³

One great source of contention between them derived from the exclusion of the Malays from the Board of Electors of the Maradana Mosque in Colombo. It was made clear that only Moors were eligible to serve. This made the Malay community feel that they were being treated as aliens.¹⁴ The Malay community had set up their own political organisations, such as The Malay Political Association, under the leadership of Mr. J.A. Kuttilan, and the Kandy Malay Association, under the leadership of Mr. M.J. Majeed, both of them outspoken supporters of Malay separatism.

Both Moors and Malays requested the Commission to provide separate representation for them, instead of having to rely upon general Muslim representatives.¹⁵ Earlier, Muslim members had been elected and nominated, both to Municipal Councils and to the Legislative Council, irrespective of their group loyalty. From 1927 onwards, first the Malays seemed dissatisfied with this and then their demands were taken up by the Moors. Both felt that the answer lay in providing more Muslim representatives on the council.

But some opposition to this emerged from T.B. Jayah, who came from the Malay community. He was keen to have one general Muslim system of representation rather than one for Moors and another for Malays. He wanted to see both communities working together, and so made a strong attack on the separate Malay organisations. In his view:

12. Denham, E.B., *Ceylon at the Census of 1911* (Colombo, 1912), p.238.

13. Hassainmiya, B.A., *ORANG REGIMEN: "THE REGIMENT PEOPLE: A Study of the Malays of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, 1827-1873* (Unpublished Ph.D. University of Peradeniy 1984), pp. 65-67.

14. N.L.R., 1921. Ordinance to incorporate the Board of Electors of the Maradana Mosque, Ch. 241. Schedule 2nd, "The Rules and Regulations of the Corporation Act of Zahaira College" (Colombo, 1921).

15. *Donoughmore Report*, p.94.

The so-called Malay Political Association was perhaps a refuge for aspirants to the Legislative Council seats, and it counted at least two members who failed to get seats in the Council in the last elections and who were endeavouring to drag in a third who had met with a similar disappointment.¹⁶

T.B. Jayah could afford to be critical of his own community as others could not, since his fame and influence were so immense that he could hope successfully to try his hand at Muslim communal politics. But his belief in the need to preserve the unity of the Muslim community was unquestionably sincere and doubtless some others agreed with him. By 1928, T.B. Jayah also differed from other Muslims in the welcome he was prepared to give Congress. He even went so far in his sympathy as to remark:

The Congress came into being; its doors open to all. There was no exclusion of any community whatever. Muhammadans, Indians, Tamils, Burghers and Sinhalese were all to determine the destiny of the country.¹⁷

Differences appeared even amongst the Moors of the island. Immediately prior to the arrival of the Commission, numerous Moor associations had been formed: the Muslim Political committee, under the leadership of the Hon. N.H.M. Abdul Cader; the Moors Political Association, under the leadership of Mr. M.L.M. Reyah; the Batticaloa Muslim Association, under the leadership of Mr. A.K. Kariapper; the Galle Muslim Association under the leadership of Mr. F.M. Ismail; and the Young Muslim League, Galle, and Young Muslim League, Colombo, both under the leadership of Mr. S.A. Marikar. All these associations presented their own views independently to the Commission. Each association wanted to increase the number of Muslim members in the Council¹⁸ and each wanted to claim that it had brought about the increase. These parties also reflect divisions which existed between the younger and older generations in the Muslim, community each of whom wished to take control. It was also during this period that divisions appeared between the Muslims of Colombo and those of other regions.

During the hearing of the Commission, the differences between Malays and Moors became particularly embittered. Mr. M.J.Majid openly criticised the Moors, remarking:

16. *Ceylon Morning Leader*, 12 Dec., 1927.

17. *Hansard* (Legislative Council), vol. III (Colombo, 1928), p.1838.

18. *Donoughmore Report*, Appendix II, p.158.

We preferred and will always prefer the company of the progressive Malays to that of the backward Moors. That is why we claim a separate Malay seat.¹⁹

The Moor associations then also criticised the Malays:

We express profound indignation at the insulting and uncalled for remarks made by M.J.Majid, the spokesman of the so called Malay deputation before the Special Commission at Kandy, and also condemn the attitude of Mr. Z.H.Mantara in using the term 'thamby'²⁰ to designate the Moors, which is highly offensive, at the Malay mass meeting in Colombo²¹

3. The Donoughmore Report

Despite these divisions and disagreements, perhaps because of them, the Donoughmore Commission came to the conclusion that it would be in the best interest of all Muslims to work together with all the other communities. The commission was aware that this suggestion might "not be immediately acceptable to the general body of Muslims, but we are satisfied that there is little fear of religious intolerance in Ceylon, and that it will be in the best interests of the Muslims themselves that communal representation for them should cease and they should now be identified with the general electorate."²²

The Moors reacted to this report published in 1928, with various protest meetings around the country. They believed the recommendations to be unworkable and impractical.²³ They were particularly uneasy about, even if they were not always adamantly opposed to, the prospect of universal suffrage, as they felt that that would affect their community adversely.²⁴

Despite all its progressive features, the Donoughmore Report satisfied none of the major political groups in Sri Lanka. The minority

19. *Ceylon Independent*, 7 Jan., 1928.

20. "Thamby" means brother in Tamil, but it had acquired a pejorative meaning.

21. *Ceylon Independent*, 2 Jan., 1928.

22. Donoughmore Report, p.94.

23. de Silva, K.M., *A History of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi 1981), p. 423. For opposite view see, Barron, T.J., "The Donoughmore Commission and Ceylon's National Identity", Seminar Paper on George Shepperson Conference on Commonwealth and African History, University of Edinburgh, 5 July, 1987.

24. C.O. 54/892, Young Muslim League meeting, 31 Oct., 1928; China Fort Muslim Association, Beruwala, 12 Sept., 1928.

communities were bitterly hostile, largely on account of its forth-right condemnation of communal electorates. In devising an electoral structure which made no provision for communal electorates, the Donoughmore Report, unlike the earlier Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian constitutional reform, may be seen as taking, as its basic premise, the entire subordination of communalism to national identity. In the eyes of minority representatives, the proposed new constitution would transfer a significant degree of political power to Sri Lanka, with quite inadequate safeguards for the protection of their interests. The prospect of universal suffrage, and so of majority rule, made the proposals of the Donoughmore Commission no more palatable to them. T.B. Jayah wrote to the Secretary of State:

The Muslims in Ceylon justly feel that they have been differently treated from their co-religionists in India and look with confidence to the authorities in England to redress the wrong that has been done to them.²⁵

However, by July 1929, when the Donoughmore Constitution was debated in the Legislative Council, T.B. Jayah introduced a new note into Muslim politics when he tried to draw a distinction between majority rule (which he claimed to favour) and the Donoughmore proposals on abolishing communal electorates (which he opposed outright). Of the former he remarked:

I am not afraid of domination by the Sinhalese people. We have no objection to the majority community ruling this country. Let them govern. We will help them.²⁶

In thus supporting Sinhalese majority control, he lined up with two small but influential groups which emerged as sympathetic to Donoughmore, Goonesinha's Labour Union and the Unionist Association.²⁷

Yet all the minority representatives, including the Muslims, voted against the adoption of the Donoughmore proposals when they came up for debate in the Legislative Council. The proposals were only accepted by a very slim majority (19 votes to 17).²⁸ Afterwards, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, as a spokesman for the Tamils, made a well-publicised - but entirely fruitless - visit to Whitehall to try to persuade the Colonial Office to reject the Donoughmore proposals.²⁹

25. C.O. 54/900, T.B. Jayah to Secretary of State, 27 July, 1930.

26. *Hansard* (Legislative Council), 1929 (Colombo, 1929), col. 843.

27. *Ceylon Times*, 15 June, 1929.

28. *Hansard* (Legislative Council), 1929 (Colombo 1929), p.325.

29. *The London Times*, 19 April, 1930.

On July 27th, 1930, T.B. Jayah sent the Colonial Office a memorandum entitled "Muslims and the Proposed Constitutional Changes in Ceylon", in which he complained of the Muslims being subjected to a scheme wholly injurious to their interests. In his memorandum, he suggested that special Muslim electorates should be set up to ensure that Muslim representatives would always be voted onto the Legislative Council.³⁰ T.B. Jayah's memorandum was submitted and scrutinized in the Colonial Office soon after the publication of the Donoughmore Report. But whilst the Colonial Secretary, Lord Passfield, was not unsympathetic and willing to concede that a Muslim member might be appointed to the Council, he rejected the memorandum's appeal for a separate electorate.³¹

Meanwhile, yet another Muslim group appeared and demanded separate representation. One Mr. Muhammad Hussain Khan submitted a memorandum to the Colonial Secretary asking him to appoint an Afghan Muslim to the Legislative Council. This however, was totally rejected. The Governor felt that this group - its membership was tiny - had no very powerful claim to be regarded as a separate constituent political unit.³²

The Muslims, like the other minorities, continued to have grave misgivings about their position under the new system. Their apprehension turned to dismay when it became known that, instead of the 65 constituencies recommended by the Donoughmore Report, there were to be only 50, and these were to be single member constituencies.³³ For the Muslims, this was a bitter blow. For when the report of the Delimitation Commission of 1930 was published, it was evident that there was not one single constituency in which they had a majority position.³⁴

Moreover, there were only 3 (Colombo Central and 2 Eastern Province seats) in which they appeared to have a reasonable chance of success. As it turned out, their worst fears were not entirely realised, but only one Muslim was elected to the State Council in 1931, when Mohamed Macan Markar was returned by the Batticaloa South electorate. Jayah lost Colombo Central.³⁵ With one nominated member (M.K. Saldin), the Muslims

30. C.O. 54/900/7, File no. 73230/10, T.B. Jayah's memorandum of 27 July, 1930.

31. C.O. 54/900/7, File no. 73230/10, T.B. Jayah's memorandum of 27 July, 1930.

32. C.O. 54/900/7, File no. 73230/10, Muhammad Hussain Khan to the Colonial Secretary, 11 Nov., 1930. The Afghan Muslims were mostly *Pushtu* speaking people from Afghanistan; most of them were engaged in the money lending business. See, Rana-sinha, A.G., *Census of Ceylon*, 1946 (Colombo, 1951), pp.117-18.

33. *Donoughmore Report*, p.28.

34. *Report of the First Delimitation Commission, Ceylon*, Sessional Paper XIII (Colombo, 1946), p.23.

35. *C.B.B.*, 1931 (Colombo, 1931), p. J.4.

now had only two members in a house of 60 (50 elected, 7 nominated and 3 Officers of State),³⁶ where previously, under the Manning Constitution and its system of communal electorates, they had 3 elected members.

There was some small consolation for them, however, with the election of Sir Mohamed Macan Markar to head the Committee on Transport and Works, the first Muslim member of the Board of Ministers.³⁷

4. From Donoughmore to Soulbury

Some serious weaknesses in the representation of minorities on the State Council remained. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan had died in 1930,³⁸ and among the Tamil leaders there was no one of equal stature to replace him. This might have presented an opportunity for a Muslim to assert his leadership over the minorities. The only likely candidate, Sir Mohamed Macan Markar, failed to do so, however. Not only was he too tepid in his leadership, but he was also notoriously over-cautious.

On 20th July, 1931,³⁹ soon after the General Election, a meeting was held in Colombo to protest about the inadequate Muslim representation in the Council and to request two additional communal representatives.⁴⁰ The British Governor, Graeme Thomson (1931-33), felt that the Muslims were wasting their time on this issue, and that they had no case to present. He reported to the Secretary of State that "the deputation, who represented their case with a marked lack of ability, wholly failed to convince me that there is any danger that Muslim interests will be disregarded by the State Council. The objections... appeared to me to be purely theoretical, and I have little doubt that the movement to approach you in the matter has been largely engineered by Messrs. Jayah and Abdul Cader, who were disappointed at not having obtained seats in the State Council themselves."⁴¹

Eventually, the Muslim wounds from the time of the Donoughmore Commission began slowly to heal. In a memorandum sent as early as November 1931 to the Colonial Secretary of State, the Eastern Province Muslims, who were the most densely settled of all non-Colombo Muslims, asserted their support for the Donoughmore Report and disassociated themselves from the other Muslim spokesmen on the island. They felt that

36. See Appendix V, Muslim members in the Legislative Council.

37. *C.B.B.*, 1931 (Colombo, 1931), p.J.4.

38. *Ceylon Daily News*, 5 May, 1930.

39. *Ceylon Daily News*, 20 July, 1931.

40. C.O. 54/907, The Muslims of the Island to the Secretary of State, 14 Oct., 1931.

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the Donoughmore Report, by abolishing communal representation on the island, would thereby unite all the communities. They also wanted to improve relations with the British in order to gain greater influence with them.⁴²

T.B. Jayah was very keen to travel to London to meet the Secretary of State and to discuss Muslim representation on the Council. But the Colonial Office in London initially refused to see him. The Colonial Office did see in his opposition to the proposals, however, a helpful development. The minutes of W.M.R. Croise, of the Ceylon Department at the Colonial Office, read:

Not an unwelcome complication as the Secretary of State will have some reason to delay the whole thing....⁴³

T.B. Jayah decided to reject the advice not to travel to London. There the Sri Lankan Muslim delegation was met by the Under Secretary of State, Sir Robert Hamilton, not by the Secretary of State, who said he was otherwise engaged. It was Sir Robert Hamilton, therefore, who now informed the Muslims that their request might be sympathetically considered and who even indicated that the Colonial Office was prepared to revise the Constitution for their sake.⁴⁴

The Colonial Office's attitude to the minorities had by then begun to change. If a balance of power was to be struck, the majority would have to be restrained. It was now felt that the Donoughmore Commissioners had been too dogmatic in their strictures on communal representation, and that their report had led to a worsening of communal relations in Sri Lanka. This was doubtless why the British government did not initially welcome the Muslim delegation's visit to Britain to discuss their grievances but then changed its mind. The British, in fact, now wished perhaps to use a "divide and rule" policy. They could use the Muslims to reduce the majority power in the Legislative Council. But if this was the plan, it did not work as expected.

The Muslims of Sri Lanka had been expected to rely on one prediction in the Donoughmore Report:

The Muslim community in Ceylon have for centuries served a useful purpose, especially as traders and merchants..... As long as they

42. See the following sources: C.O., 54/907, Eastern Province Muslims to Secretary of State, 12 Nov., 1931.

43. C.O. 54/907, W.M.R. Croise, Minutes, 28 Nov., 1931.

44. *Ceylon Daily News*, 8 Dec., 1931.

contribute, as they do now, by their special qualities, to the general prosperity and welfare of the country, there is little likelihood that their interests will be adversely affected by any action of the Legislative Council.⁴⁵

If this sounded reassuring, the new State Council elections, held on 10th March, 1936, suggested otherwise. The elections were an unmitigated disaster for the Muslims: not a single Muslim was elected. Without Sir Mohamed Macan Markar, who was defeated, or T.B. Jayah, who again lost in the Colombo Central constituency, the need for a more assured form of representation of a reasonable number of Muslims was now raised as a battle-cry by the Muslim community.

By way of compensation to the Muslims, two of their community were now nominated as members - T.B. Jayah, despite his defeat, and a newcomer, Sir Razik Fareed,⁴⁶ who was to make a notable contribution in paving the way for a change of policy among the Muslims themselves in relation to the Nationalist Movement and to the transfer of power.

With the arrival of Sir Razik Fareed, the political prospects of the Muslims of Sri Lanka subtly changed. A struggle ensued among the leaders, who had begun to appeal directly for support to the Muslims in the country.

5. The Political Role Played by Muslims During the Independence Era.

By 1942 the effects of this change in their prospects was reflected in Muslim attitudes to the Nationalist Movement. In that year their ranks in the State Council were increased by one when Dr. M.C.M. Kaleel won a by-election for the Colombo Central seat caused by the removal of Mr. A.E. Goonesinha. The poll was small (only 25% of the total electorate voted) and the vote was split amongst a number of candidates, none of whom was a national figure, but in the low poll Dr. Kaleel won a narrow victory.⁴⁷

45. Donoughmore Report, p.94

46. *C.B.B.*, 1937 (Colombo, 1937), p.J.4. transfer of power.

47. Mr. Goonesinha was removed for election offences committed during the campaign for the Colombo Central seat at the by-election held on 25 Feb., 1942. This information was obtained from Dr. M.C.M. Kaleel, who is a medical doctor by profession. He studied at the University of Edinburgh in 1926. He was formerly Minister of Labour in the United National Party Government of 1952, and at present he is the Chairman of the United National Party. About the same time in March 1942, Sir Razik Fareed, who had been a member of the Executive Committee on Local Administration, switched over to the Education Committee, giving that committee now two Muslim members (the other being T.B. Jayah).

A changing Muslim attitude to the majority community became perceptible during the voting in the State Council on J.R. Jayewardene's⁴⁸ motion, debated in May 1944, to make Sinhalese the national language of Sri Lanka.⁴⁹ Differences in opinion between Sir Razik and T.B. Jayah were clearly demonstrated on this issue.

When J.R. Jayewardene first introduced his motion in 1943 there was much opposition to it on the grounds that it made no provision for Tamil. By the time the motion came up for debate in 1944, however, J.R. Jayewardene had agreed to alter his proposal so as to include Tamil along with Sinhalese to make two national languages. With the mover's consent, a Tamil Member, V. Nalliah, moved a formal amendment, that the words "and Tamil" be added after the word "Sinhalese" whenever the latter occurred. The amendment was debated, put to the vote on 25th May, 1944 and carried by 29 votes to 8. T.B. Jayah voted for the amendment; Sir Razik joined 7 others voting against it. Among those who voted against were the 3 European appointed Members and a Burgher. They were opposed to the whole idea of either Sinhalese or Tamil replacing English as the official language. But there were also four Sinhalese who were opposed because they wanted Sinhalese to be the sole national language: they were B.H. Aluvihare,

A. Ratnayake, U.B. Wanninayake and Dudley Senanayake.⁵⁰ Sir Razik's reasons for how he voted on this occasion were made clear in his speech - a brief one - and are worth quoting.⁵¹ He said:

I feel that in the best interest of Lanka, my mother country, I must stand up for the motion of the honourable member of Kelaniya (J.R. Jayewardene); that is that Sinhalese should be the official language of the country. However, there is not the slightest doubt that this cannot be done in a hurry, in a year or two, or even in ten years. I certainly feel that it is in the best interests of Lanka and her people. One language will bring unity among our people. We are already divided at the present moment. Each community has its own language. But if we all take one language, then we will not think in terms of Tamils, Moors, Sinhalese, Burghers, Malays and so on.

48. J.R. Jayewardene, Prime Minister 1977-1978, Executive President 1979-1989. He had organized a Peace March from Kelaniya to Kandy to get the support to make Sinhalese language the national language of Sri Lanka. Under his Presidentship, the Parliament of Sri Lanka amended the Constitution sixteen times.

49. *Hansard*, vol. I (State Council) 24th May, 1944 (Colombo 1944) p.816.

50. *Hansard*, vol. I (State Council), 1944 (Colombo, 1944), p.816.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 812. Razik's speech of 25 May, 1944.

His position, therefore in wishing to see the whole matter postponed, was closer in some respects to that of the European members than it was to the Sinhala-only group. It was for this reason that Sir Razik Fareed joined with Dr. M.C.M. Kaleel to support an amendment proposed by T.B. Jayah. This amendment would have had the effect of postponing a decision, as it sought to leave the implementation of the policy on language to the recommendations of a Commission to be appointed by the house. But Jayah's amendment attracted only 12 supporters. There were 25 against. S.W.R.D. Bandaranike gave Jayah's amendment strong support in this debate, describing it as "the wisest, the best amendment";⁵² but, curiously, when it came to voting, he preferred to remain neutral. He was the only member present to decline to vote on this amendment.⁵³

Looking back on it now, this debate on language policy was clearly one of the land-marks of the last years of British rule. The Sinhalese leadership was then divided on how to proceed, some preferring both Sinhala and Tamil, others Sinhala-only, while the Tamils were solidly against Sinhala-only. But, it became equally clear in that debate that the Tamils could no longer rely on solid Muslim support in their political opposition. When G.G. Ponnambalam's vociferous campaign for balanced representation had begun in 1937, he counted on the support of the Muslims. They, naturally enough, were in a disgruntled mood in the aftermath of the debacle of the General Election of 1936. Ponnambalam's campaign, "the 50-50 Campaign", as it was called, enjoyed the full sympathy and support of the Muslims in its earliest phase.⁵⁴ But that support became less enthusiastic in time, has had become uncertain by the early 1940s, as the political alliance between Tamils and Muslims came apart over conflicting attitudes to the transfer of power. Some Muslim seemed to prefer to agitate on their own, or more significantly were even prepared now to back the Sinhalese leadership in the latter's political campaigns.⁵⁵

6. The Soulbury Report

In May 1943, the Board of Ministers learned of a significant promise from Whitehall on the post-war constitutional status of Sri Lanka. This formed the basis of the so-called pronouncement of May 1943. By this, Whitehall insisted that approval of any new constitution must be by a

52. *Hansard*, vol. I (State Council), 1944 (Colombo, 1944), p.812. S.W.R.D. Bandaranike's speech of 25 May, 1944.

53. *Ibid.*, p.816.

54. *Hinud Organ*, 28 May, 1937.

55. *Hansard*, vol. II (State Council), 1939 (Colombo, 1939), col. 1675. Sir Mohamed Macan Markar's speech.

majority of three quarters of the total members of the State Council (save the speaker of the Assembly and 3 Officers of State), which meant a minimum of 42 votes, an impossible task unless the minorities gave their support. Indeed this requirement was a guarantee that the wishes of the minorities would be given a great deal of consideration.

Inevitably, all political groups in the island then turned their attention to the mechanics of the next stage in Sri Lanka's constitutional evolution, and the minorities now looked to their particular needs in the next phase of the transition to Dominion Status.⁵⁶

By the early part of 1944, a process of constitution-drafting had been completed. The next step was to be the examination of the draft by a Commission sent out from England once the war was over. Thereafter, the constitution had to be finally approved in the State Council by the special majority mentioned earlier. By the time the debate on language policy took place in 1944, there had therefore been a great change in the political situation.

A period of heightened expectations had arrived. The campaign for constitutional reform received a further major boost in 1944 when Whitehall was persuaded to advance the process of examining the Ministers' draft constitution instead of waiting till after the war was over.⁵⁷

A Commission under Viscount Soulbury was appointed for this purpose and arrived in the island on December 22nd, 1944. One of its aims was to study the problems of the minorities.⁵⁸ At this time there were many Muslim organisations in the island, each viewing the other suspiciously and each making claims and counter-claims for constitutional concessions: the largest were the All-Ceylon Muslim League, under the leadership of T.B. Jayah; the All-Ceylon Muslim Political Conference, under Sir Mohamed Macan Markar and T.B. Jayah (members of the State Council), and the Ceylon Moors Association, under the leadership of Sir Razik Fareed (member of the State Council). There were also three Malay organisations: the All-Ceylon Malay Congress, under the leadership of Dr. M.P.C. Drahman; the Malay Political Association of Ceylon, under the leadership of Mr. Z.D. Musaffer, and the All-Ceylon Malay League, under the leadership of Mr. T.K. Burah.⁵⁹

56. *C.S.P. no. XVII, 1943* (Colombo, 1943), pp. 5-6; 8-10.

57. *C.S.P. no. XIV, 1944* (Colombo, 1944), pp. 1-2.

58. *Ceylon Report of the Commission on Constitutional Reform (Soulbury Report)* (Lond., 1945), p. 3. (Hereinafter, *Soulbury Report*).

59. *Soulbury Report*, Appendix II, p. 136.

When the Soulbury Commission began its sessions on the island, the various Moor and Malay associations were still arguing for separate representation on the Council. The All-Ceylon Malay Congress still held that there were fundamental differences between Malays and Moors.⁶⁰ The Malay Political Association also wanted a separate Malay member on the Council. They both still argued that while the Malays were more open and fluid in their social relationships, the Moors were conservative, and that each community belonged to a different ethnic group.⁶¹ The All-Ceylon Malay League held that there was internal economic rivalry between Moors and Malays and that Moors coveted Malay jobs in the forces and in the Government clerical service. They also claimed that the Moors would try to dominate the Malay community unless the Malays had a separate member on the Council.⁶²

However, T.B. Jayah repeated his advice to Donoughmore and requested the Soulbury Commission to set up only one separate Muslim electorate on the island.⁶³ Sir Razik Fareed now supported him, arguing that the Muslims ought to be treated as a single "down-trodden" community, which had never been adequately represented in the National Legislature. To wipe off this past injustice, he pleaded for the provision of 12 seats.⁶⁴

The Soulbury Commission rejected both Sir Razik Fareed's and Jayah's appeals but made provision for members to be elected from minority communities by the old method of boundary revision, to be determined by a Delimitation Commission:

.....Wherever it should appear to the [Delimitation] Commission that there was a substantial concentration in any area of a province of persons united by a community interest, whether racial, religious or otherwise, the Commission should be at liberty to modify the factor of numerical equality of persons in that area and make such division of the province into electoral districts as might be necessary to render possible the representation of that interest.⁶⁵

With the Soulbury commissioners in the island, the State Council

60. *Ceylon Daily News*, 28 Jan., 1945.

61. *Ceylon Daily News*, 1 Feb., 1945.

62. *Ceylon Daily News*, 1 Feb. 1945.

63. *The Memorandum to the Soulbury Commission by the Ceylon Muslim League*. (Ceylon Muslim League, Colombo, 1945), p. 15.

64. *The Memorandum of the Ceylon Moors' Association to the Chairman and the Members of the Royal Commission on Constitutional Reform* (Ceylon Moors Association, Colombo, 1945), pp. 19-20. See also *Hansard*, vol. II (State Council) (Colombo, 1945), col. 7063-64.

65. *Soulbury Report*, p. 73.

debated a motion directing the Ministers to introduce forthwith a Bill providing for a constitution of the recognized Dominion type for a free Lanka. This went well beyond the limits set by the Pronouncement of May 1943 and was therefore not more than a political gesture, meant to convey a message to the commissioners. It had no chance at all of Whitehall approval.⁶⁶

The motion was, none the less, carried by a vote of 26 for and 3 against, with 6 abstaining. All the Muslim members supported it: Jayah and Dr. Kaleel spoke in favour,⁶⁷ and Sir Razik and Dr. Kaleel voted for it (Jayah was not present for the vote).⁶⁸ On 9th November, 1945, the historic vote took place on the acceptance of the Soulbury proposals. All the Muslim members voted in favour.⁶⁹ Two of them, Jayah and Sir Razik, spoke on that occasion, each in support. But their speeches were a study in contrasts, as a few extracts from them will show.

T.B. Jayah's speech on the Soulbury proposals was delivered in a sombre mood. His was a phlegmatic contribution. He refused to call himself a Moor, but described himself and his community as "Muslim".⁷⁰ It seems that he was determined to insist that Moors and Malays must now acknowledge a common identity as Muslims.⁷¹ Although he supported the Soulbury proposals to obtain independence for the Motherland, he, as a member of a minority community in the Council, felt uncomfortable with them. He suspected that once Sri Lanka got her independence, the Sinhalese community would dominate over the Muslim community in the Council. The Soulbury proposals would not absolutely guarantee that even one Muslim member would be elected to the Council.⁷²

Sir Razik Fareed's tone was altogether different. He spoke with a zest and enthusiasm which was lacking in T.B. Jayah's contribution. There was a more total sense of commitment to the nationalist cause, which came from a clearer commitment to the forces of change at work in Sri Lankan society. But what set him most apart from Jayah were the frequent criticisms he made of the Tamils in his speech, not sparing even their leader G.G. Ponnambalam, who was a notable absentee at this memorable debate.⁷³ Sir

66. *Hansard*, vol. II (State Council), May 1944 (Colombo, 1944), p. 150.

67. *Hansard*, vol. II (State Council), 1944 (Colombo, 1944), pp. 2635-38 and 2671 for Jayah's speech, pp. 2668-70 for Kaleel's contribution and 2704-5.

68. *Hansard*, vol. II (State Council), 1944 (Colombo, 1944), p. 2707 for voting figures.

69. *Hansard*, vol. II (State Council), 1945 (Colombo, 1945), p. 2707.

70. *Ibid.*, col. 7009-7013 for Jayah's speech.

71. *Ibid.*, col. 7009-7013.

72. *Hansard*, vol. II (State Council), 1945 (Colombo, 1945), col. 7009-7013. Jayah was the last Malay member in the Council.

73. *Hansard*, vol. II (State Council), 1945 (Colombo, 1945), col. 7059-7066 for Razik's speech.

Razik Fareed preferred to use the word "Moor" rather than "Muslim". He said that, as a member of the majority Muslim community of Sri Lanka, he had full authority to speak on its behalf. However, in the end both T.B. Jayah and Sir Razik Fareed were agreed in accepting the leadership of the Sinhalese politician, D.S. Senanayake, and in pledging their support for his political programme for the attainment of independence.⁷⁴

7. Toward Independence

In 1946, the United National Party was formed. The Muslims in the past had remained communally separate, but now they joined this new political party. Sir Razik Fareed became one of the Joint Treasurers of the party, along with J.R. Jayewardene. Jayah, now an elder statesman, was assured of a leadership role within the new party.

Yet the years 1942 to 1947, as British rule began to approach an end, were a difficult period for the Muslims of Sri Lanka. The Muslim leaders continued to quarrel among themselves over the political issues facing the country. Though they, on the whole, kept to the side of those Sinhalese leaders who guided the United National Party, the Muslims were in disagreement about the Tamils. The Muslim spokesmen, like Sir Razik Fareed and T.B. Jayah, still argued also over who should provide leadership for the community. Sir Razik Fareed and T.B. Jayah were socially at odds. Sir Razik Fareed belonged to elite family; but though he was a man of wealth, he had no university education. He had been elected, however, as President of the prestigious Ceylon Moor Association. T.B. Jayah did not come from an elite group. He held a B.A. degree from the University of London and had risen to be President of the Muslim League.

8. Sir Razik Fareed - "Somersault Leader" [1893-1984]

Sir Razik Fareed began his career in party politics as the Joint-Treasurer of the United National Party in 1946. His first attempt to enter the new Parliament was at Pottuvilu in 1947. He was defeated. In November 1947, he became a member of the Senate. In 1952, he resigned his membership of the Senate and stood as an Independent candidate in the Colombo Central constituency and won the seat. In 1952, the then Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Sir John Kotelawala, persuaded him to join the United National Party government. He was thereupon elected as the Member of Parliament for Colombo Central. In 1958 he resigned from the United National Party and joined the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, which then formed

74. *Hansard*, vol. II (State Council), 1945 (Colombo, 1945), col. 7009-7013 and 7059-7066.

the principal element in the government. Even earlier he had voted with them to save the government on a no confidence motion.

In the March 1960 General Election Sir Razik Fareed again contested Colombo Central, this time as a candidate of the Lanka Prajantantravadi Party. But he lost. For the General Election held in July 1960, he resigned from the recently formed Lanka Prajantantravadi Party and became a member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party again, once more contesting the Colombo Central constituency. He again lost the election. In 1965 he resigned from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and rejoined the United National Party. He contested Colombo Central and was defeated. However, he was asked to serve as a nominated Member of Parliament in 1965 and remained in Parliament till 1968. He then went as the Sri Lanka Ambassador to Pakistan, returning to Sri Lanka in 1977. Sir Razik Fareed remains the only Member of Parliament who has been at various times a supporter of the United National Party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the Lanka Prajantantravadi Party.⁷⁵ The Hon. Shirley Corea, when Deputy Speaker, paid an ironic tribute to him by remarking in 1966:

Governments may come and Governments may go but Sir Razik Fareed goes on for ever.

Yet, in the context of Sri Lanka politics, Sir Razik Fareed's opinions and ideas can be held to reflect much deeper Muslim attitudes and interests. In 1948 and 1949 a number of Acts - the Citizenship Act, the Official Language Act, the Indian and Pakistani Residents (Citizenship) Act and the Ceylon Parliamentary Election Amendment Act - had the effect of disenfranchising many Indians who worked on the tea plantations. These Acts of Parliament, which openly operated against one minority group, were passed during the Premiership of D.S. Senanayake. Most of the Sri Lanka Tamil Members of Parliament supported them. The Ceylon Tamil members were seen by the Indian Tamils as betraying them, yet they and the Muslim members at that time continued to support the government.

The Indians included a number of Muslims. According to the 1946 census, the Indian Muslim population was about 35,000; the non-Muslim Indian Tamils were about 780,000.⁷⁶ The Indian Muslims were said to regard Sri Lanka only as a temporary home. They supposedly stayed in Sri Lanka only to engage in trade, to accumulate wealth and then to return to India. The fact that the local Muslims supported the Government Bill is surely an

75. *Hansard* (House of Representative), vol. II, 1966 (Colombo, 1966), p.2317.

76. Ranasing, A.J., *Census of Ceylon 1946* (Colombo, 1947), p.18.

indication that they accepted this view and thought that the Indians may have deserved sound economic prospects, but not the prospect of citizenship. In all probability, the Sri Lankan Muslims resented the economic competition of their Indian co-religionists and so saw no reason why Indian Muslims should enjoy rights of citizenship.

The afternoon that the Citizenship Bill came to be voted upon in Senate, Sir Razik Fareed was boarding a plane to Mecca for Hadj. Before leaving for the airport, he had gone to the Senate and made a speech:

We the Ceylon Moors have suffered most in the past from want of a citizen bill. We... have been treated very badly by certain people, under the guise of Muslim brotherhood. We have very unfortunately played ourselves into the hands of other people.⁷⁷

What this means is not entirely clear, but Fareed seems to have intended to criticise Pan-Islamic loyalties and to have sought to make clear that, unlike Indian Muslims, Sri Lanka Muslims were Sri Lankans first and Muslims only secondarily.

Much later he was to return to the subject:

The Ceylon Moors had a flourishing trade in Main Street, Pettah, barely 40 years ago, but today you find the whole of the trade in the Pettah, even the property which the Moors owned in the Pettah, in the hands of non-Ceylon traders.⁷⁸

This was clearly aimed at Indian Muslims. Fareed claimed that he had supported the Government on its Sinhala-only Language Bill in 1944 for precisely this reason, though it was then too early to make this policy into a reality.⁷⁹ The "Sinhala-only" policy tended, of course, to divide Tamils and Sinhalese. Sir Razik Fareed saw giving support to the Sinhalese on such questions as a useful political strategy which allowed him to win substantial benefits for the Muslim community, for example, in the field of education.

9. Education

The Tamil teachers, who dominated the field of education among the Muslims until 1950, were repeatedly attacked by Sir Razik Fareed in the State Council. He described them as a "tyranny".⁸⁰ He remarked:

77. *Hansard*, vol. II (Senate) no. 18, 14 Sept., 1948 (Colombo, 1948), p.2718.

78. *Hansard*, vol. III (Senate, no. 15, 17 Nov., 1948 (Colombo, 1948), p.1171.

79. *Hansard*, vol. I (State Council), 1944 (Colombo, 1944), p. 812.

80. *Hansard*, vol. I (State Council), 1948 (Colombo, 1948), pp.3780-81.

By the end of the 1930s there were no fewer than 195 (Muslim) schools with a total of only 25 Muslim teachers.....⁸¹

In 1948 there were 253 Government vernacular Tamil schools, in each of which more than 50 per cent of the students were Muslims. But there were only 50 permanent Muslim headmasters and 238 permanent Muslim teachers. Of the latter, only 125 were trained teachers.⁸² Two years later it was found that a total of 1,070 Muslim teachers were required to staff all Government schools where Muslim students were in a majority; but there were only 433 available at that time.⁸³

Sir Razik Fareed's campaign in Parliament for Muslim teachers and schools, however, encouraged other Parliamentarians to criticise the Muslim Educational System. Dr. N.M. Perera, the Sinhalese Trotskyite leader, was very critical of what was taught in Muslim schools. He said:

We want our religion safeguarded. Why should Muslim children read about the history of others, when we have a better culture?

But although he was determined to have Buddhist Sri Lanka history emphasised, he was willing to make some concessions. He favoured teaching minority community history alongside majority community history, and so he was prepared to support the employment of Muslim teachers for Muslim area schools.⁸⁴

Sir Razik Fareed and his fellow Muslim Parliamentarians gave whole-hearted support to the government on important issues, such as that of the National flag, the Citizenship Act and the Sinhala Official Language Bill.⁸⁵ By thus supporting the government, the Muslim community believed that it might gain some advantages. In 1956, the Muslim Mosques Charitable Trusts and Waqf Bill was passed in Parliament, which prevented several malpractices earlier prevalent in the mosques.⁸⁶ In the same year, the government also declared the Prophet Muhammad's birthday a public holiday. In 1957, Sir Razik Fareed secured a concession from the government permitting attendance at the Friday noon prayers by government servants.

81. *Ibid.*, p.4265.

82. *Hansard*, vol.I (Senate) 8 Dec., 1948 (Colombo, 1948), p. 2171.

83. *Hansard*, vol. II (House of Representative), 4 April, 1950, (Colombo, 1950), p.1175.

84. *Hansard*, vol. III (House of Representative), 9 Dec., 1947 (Colombo, 1947), pp. 2459-61.

85. The motion regarding the National flag of Sri Lanka was moved by Mr. Sinne Lebbe, the Member for Batticaloa. See *Hansard*, vol. III (House of Representative), 16 Jan., 1948 (Colombo, 1948), p. 1171.

86. *L.E.C.*, 1956 (Colombo, 1956) "The Act no. 51 of 1956".

10. Summary

When, in 1917, the National Congress was formed, Muslims played no part in it, perhaps because during the Sinhalese-Muslim conflict of 1915 they had lost some of their wealth and influence. For some time afterwards, the Muslims did not support the Sinhalese majority group.

By 1944 they had come round to favouring the report submitted by the Soulbury Commission, which argued for Dominion Status and a type of democratic rule in Sri Lanka, even though they still had reservations about how the larger Sinhalese community might respond to the minority communities. During the course of the 1940s, the political attitudes of the Muslim leadership were not consistent. Dr. T.B. Jayah was a stalwart of the United National Party and gained a place in its government, formed in 1947. Sir Razik Fareed, however, was more flexible in his loyalties. His fickle behaviour aroused the distrust of the Sinhalese community, so that, eventually, neither the Sri Lanka Freedom Party nor the United National Party would offer him a ministerial post. How, then, did the Muslims themselves perceive their role in Sri Lankan politics? What were their tactics and what their gains? After Sir Razik Fareed's entry into politics in 1936, there was a great deal of in-fighting among the Muslims. Some of their differences found expression in the controversy which broke out over the use of the terms "Moor" and "Muslim", and over which of the two was the more appropriate for the community. Those, like Sir Razik Fareed, who were in favour of the term "Moor" had in mind the claims to Arab historical origins for the community.⁸⁷ Others, like Jayah, felt this term to be too exclusive and even elitist. They favoured the term "Muslim", as it covered also all other Islamic groups (especially the Malay and Bohora communities).⁸⁸ But the term "Moor" was well established, and even today the Sri Lankan government tends to use the word "Moor" rather than "Muslim".

The objections of Jayah to the term "Moor" as a description of the Muslims of Sri Lanka must surely be attributed to the fact that he came from Sri Lanka's Malay Community. Had all the Muslim groups in Sri Lanka been described simply as Muslims, the Malay community might have been more ready to merge with the other Muslims. As it was, they felt unable to do so, and so the Malays still preserve an individual identity.

Muslim leaders, then adopted a variety of tactics during this period. Though Sir Razik Fareed's shifts of affiliation were somewhat eccentric, his

87. *Hansard* (State Council) vol. II, 1945 (Colombo, 1945), col. 7007-13.

88. *Hansard* (State Council) vol. II, 1945 (Colombo, 1945), col. 7059-66.

actions were, in a way, a pointer to the benefits that might be derived for the community by supporting whichever group, left-wing as well as right-wing, had power. It can be argued that by these means Muslims did win concessions, especially in the fields of Law and Education. By supporting both major Sinhalese parties, Muslim leaders were able to solicit help from both sides. They found it unprofitable, however, to support the Tamil leaders, whom they also saw as tending to exploit them in order to realise their own ambitions, and, this done, to then push them aside.

The Muslims of Sri Lanka had little prospect, unlike the Tamils, of creating a separate State.⁸⁹ Pakistan was successful in breaking away from India, overwhelmingly Hindu, and adopting Muslim rule.⁹⁰ Unlike the Tamils, however, the majority of whom live in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka, the Muslims though clustering in certain areas, lived scattered all around the country. The Muslims of Sri Lanka were therefore denied any prospect of forming a separate State.⁹¹ In any view, the Muslim leaders saw it as preferable to support the two major National Parties.

The Roman Catholics, too, followed the same political attitude as the Muslims of Sri Lanka. They were the first group which had disputes (from the mid 1840s) with the majority Buddhists. The Roman Catholics benefited from Colonial rule, for example in the Civil Service and the professions, and this caused jealousy among the Buddhists. However, in the 1960s the Catholic community, like the Muslims earlier, accepted the fact that they had to give way to the majority Sinhalese community if they were to preserve their ethnic identity.⁹²

89. Wilson, A.J., Dennis Dalton (ed.) *The States of South Asia* (Lond., 1982), p.298.

90. *Ibid.*, p.25.

91. Manor, James (ed.), *Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis* (Lond., 1984), p.53.

92. Manor, James (ed.), *Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis* (Lond., 1984), p.211.

7 MUSLIM TRADE IN SRI LANKA DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD

1. Muslim Participation in the Export and Import Sector

This chapter deals with two main groups of Muslim traders in the island. The first consists of those who were involved in the country's export sector. This group of international traders mainly exported gems and imported diamonds and, later, motor vehicles and household items.

The Second group consists of those who bought and sold coconuts. This group was more independent. They did not sell their coconuts to the large traders but exported them directly to South India.

The earliest Muslims in Sri Lanka were traders. From Sri Lanka, Muslim merchants had acquired gems, cloves, cardamom, elephants and elephants' tusks. The most valuable to them was the gem trade. Sri Lanka is even today famous for its gems, ranging from sapphires to topaz, malachites, opals and even rubies. During the pre-colonial period, the mining of gems seems to have been a royal monopoly. Individuals were allowed to mine gems, but only under the supervision of royal officials; and the king retained full rights over the most valuable gems. But some gems were sometimes sold to Muslim merchants who then traded them overseas.

After the Kandyan kingdom was captured in 1815, Muslim trade in Sri Lanka began to flourish again. The Muslims of Sri Lanka were permitted to own property in the areas of the Pettah and Fort, a right they soon began to exercise. Furthermore, when the British adopted a policy of liberalising trade¹, this also helped the Muslim community. Under this encouragement, Muslims began to regain a major place in the commercial life of the island. A number of Muslim companies sprang into existence to exploit the new opportunities. (See Table IV)

The offices of the early Muslim companies in Sri Lanka were all situated in the Pettah. Later some were based in the Fort, which was more

1. C.O. 54/122, Colebrooke to the Secretary of State, 31 Jan., 1832.

prestigious, being the area where the Governor of Sri Lanka had his official residence. One company in the 1860s had its headquarters in Galle, most probably because its founders lived there.

Galle is a town where many Muslims live. Another company opened a branch in Kandy. (See Table IV)

The growth of Muslim businesses in Sri Lanka seems to reflect developments in Sri Lanka's trade as a whole. Between 1820 and 1860 only six Muslim companies were formed. Two were set up in the year 1840 and three in the decade 1850-1860. These dates correspond to the periods of rapid growth in the export trades generally, largely because of the success of the coffee industry.² However, in 1860 the coffee plantations began to suffer losses because of their dependence on the London Money Market at a time when European investors were increasingly wary of plantation agriculture in the Indian sub-continent.³ The resultant loss of business confidence may explain why there was only one Muslim company formed between 1860 and 1870. In 1869, a leaf disease known as *hemileia vastratrix* attacked the coffee plantations and the coffee market slowly collapsed.⁴ Perhaps this in turn is reflected in the fact that only one company emerged in the 1870s. In 1886, no less than three companies were formed. Tea cultivation had become a commercial success by then and capital was again pouring into the island.⁵

The first of Sri Lanka's Muslim companies to be established was that of Mr. O.L.A.L.M. Alim in 1820. From 1820 to 1870, the company kept afloat, though very little is known of its operations. After the death of Mr. Alim, the first proprietor, in 1870, however, it ran into problems. The government of Sri Lanka had estimated his estate to amount to some Rs.1,500,000/- when his will was filed in the courts of Sri Lanka.⁶ But litigation concerning the will began immediately and went on for a long period after his death. The company was obliged to pay for the case. The terms of the will had been challenged by one of his sons, and the affair was settled only after the rest of the surviving family agreed to major revisions.

In 1917, new partners were brought into the company. These were Messrs. A.L.M. Haniffa (who acted as General Manager) and A.L.M.M.

2. de Silva, K.M. (ed.), *History of Ceylon*, vol. III (Colombo, 1973), pp. 101-102. (Chapter written by Roberts, Michael, "Export Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century".)
3. de Silva, K.M., *A History of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi, 1981), pp.285-6.
4. Snodgrass, D.R., *Ceylon an Export Economy in Transition* (Homewood, 1966), pp. 19-20.
5. Rajaratnam, S., "The Growth of Plantation Agriculture in Ceylon 1886-1931", *C.J.H.S.S.*, Jan.-June 1961, p.3.
6. *N.L.R.*, vol. 20, 1820 (Colombo, 1820), p.35.

Isadeen.⁷ After these new partners came into the firm, however, business declined. The quantity of hardware and crockery which they imported dropped, reputedly owing to some financial problems the company was facing. By 1920 these had grown so serious that the company was finally wound up.⁸

During British rule in Sri Lanka the Muslims were heavily involved in the gem trade. One example was Macan Markar and Company. This company played a role of the first importance in the island's gem trade. When he first began trading in 1860,⁹ Mr. O.L.M. Macan Markar used to travel to the mines and gem fields in Rakwana (a major gem-mining area of Sri Lanka, some 70 miles from Colombo) and Ratnapura (which is situated some 60 miles from Colombo), buying rough stones from the villagers. These he cut and polished and then either sold them in Colombo or exported them to countries abroad. One of his largest acquisitions was a catseye, which weighted 105 carats. In 1875, Macan Markar caught the attention of British royalty and sold a stone to the Prince of Wales [later His Majesty, King Edward VIII]. In 1898, Macan Markar's sons, Sir Mohamed Macan, S.D. Macan Markar and A.V. Macan Markar, became partners in the company.¹⁰ They numbered amongst their customers the Duke of Cornwall and York [later H.M. King George V].

Another rare gem acquired by the Macan Markar Company was a blue sapphire which was, at that time, the largest in the world. It was discovered at Ratnapura in 1907 and weighed 466 carats. In 1908, this stone was sold to T. Pierpont Morgan, the American multi-millionaire, who was a famous collector of art and gems. In 1912, Macan Markar's became the second Muslim company in Sri Lanka to establish branches abroad. They opened branches in Semiramis Hotel and the Intercontinental Hotel in Cairo, as well as in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem.¹¹ In April 1941, however, while World War II raged and Egypt was threatened by the panzers of the German Army's Africa Corps under General Rommel, the company and its staff in Cairo and Jerusalem decided to evacuate and return home.¹² These branches never re-opened, owing partly to various restrictions regarding the employment of foreigners which were introduced by the post-war Egyptian government.¹³

7. *C.G.B.*, 1927 (Colombo, 1927), p. 324.
8. *C.G.B.*, 1920 (Colombo, 1920), p. 324.
9. *C.G.B.*, 1932 (Colombo, 1932), p. 336.
10. *C.G.B.*, 1932 (Colombo, 1932), p. 336.
11. *C.G.B.*, 1932 (Colombo, 1932), p.336.
12. For the background see Richmond, J.C.B., *Egypt 1798-1952: Her Advance Towards a Modern Identity* (Lond., 1977), p.204. See also, *Ceylon Daily News*, April 1941.
13. Al-Kassab, Khalil Ibrahim Mohammed, "A Comparative Study of Industrial Relations in Iraq, Egypt and Syria" (Unpublished Ph.D., Edinburgh, 1972), pp.47-48.

The Macan Markar Company did, however, continue to trade with the British elite: a blue sapphire found in a paddy field at Palamadulla (a town near Rakwana) in 1926, weighing 400 carats and known as the "Blue Belle of Asia", was purchased in 1937 by Lord Nuffield, the British motor car magnate. On 16th January, 1928, the company had moved into its new premises in the Grand Oriental Hotel in Colombo. Its showrooms were declared open by the Governor, Sir Herbert J. Stanley.

In 1933, there was a change of company policy. For the first time, it introduced a scheme to enable employees to become shareholders. According to this scheme, twentyfive per cent of the net profits were to be apportioned and allocated in pre-determined proportions to the Company's employees. The scheme was apparently designed to act as an incentive for the employees to give of their best to the company.

During this period, the gem trade on the island was flourishing, the Macan Markar company being amongst those increasing their sales. On 1st July, 1944, the partners purchased from Colombo Hotels Ltd. a building as its future headquarters, at the junction of York Street and Princess Street in Colombo, then occupied by Colombo Apothecaries Ltd., of Fort, Colombo. On 30th January, 1947, this was named the Macan Markar Building.

On the 18th December, 1942, the company again had a change of policy. It was converted into a limited liability company with a special class of "A" shares, valued at Rs. 10/- each, the majority of which were allocated to its members of staff, and, which, for dividend purposes, had a relatively greater value than the "Ordinary" Rs. 100/- shares originally allocated to the partners.

The Macan Markar Company continued to supply gems to members of the British royal family. In 1954, the company sold precious stones to H.M. Queen Elizabeth II. This company was, beyond doubt, one of the most prestigious companies in the island and its customers had long included members of the British elite and even of the royal family. The Macan Markar Company was also a very progressive concern. Yet though they were the biggest and best known, Macan Markar were by no means the only Muslim company to specialise in trading in precious stones.

Other companies included, for example, Marikar Bawa and Sons, which imported diamonds from the United Kingdom for resale. Another major company was Hamid and Company, which was established in the Fort, Colombo and also had branches in the Hotel Majestic and the Tajmahal

Hotel in Bombay.¹⁴ This in fact was the first Muslim company to open branches abroad. They, too, imported diamonds from the United Kingdom and also exported pearls from Sri Lanka. Soon after World War II, however, their two Indian branches were closed down, when they encountered stiff competition from Indian gems which were then coming onto the market.

Abdul Gaffoor and Sons were also active in the country's gem trade. Abdul Gaffoor himself was, by special appointment, given the privilege of exhibiting pearls, diamonds, rubies, sapphires and jewellery to the Prince and Princess of Wales at the Kandy Pavilion in 1901, during a royal visit to Sri Lanka. His stall was also given a prominent place at the Wembley Exhibition of 1924 in London. H.M. Queen Mary personally visited his pavilion and made purchases. At his own expense, Mr. Abdul Gaffoor took part in various world gem exhibitions: the St. Louis Exhibition in the U.S.A. in 1903; the All-Ceylon Exhibition in Kandy in 1912; and the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1925. He was said in the 1920s to have the finest collection of gem stones in the country, and in 1925 was congratulated by the Governor, Sir Hugh Clifford (1925-27) on the valuable work he had done.

However, the Muslim traders of Sri Lanka did not concentrate only on exporting gems. They were also involved in importing other items. For example, in the 1840s one firm of importers was that of I.L.M. Noordeen Hadjar. This was the only company permitted by the government of Sri Lanka to import small firearms and ammunition from the United Kingdom. This suggests that a degree of trust had grown up between the British authorities and these Muslim traders.

Much later, some Muslim companies were amongst the first to import cars from Europe. One company involved in this business was that of S.L. Naina Marikar and company. This particular company did well until 1930, after which family disagreements forced it to close.

Such prominence did Muslim traders gain in the gem, jewellery and motor-vehicle trades, that they must have come close to monopolising them. But other traders interested them as well. Four Muslim companies concentrated upon importing household items. They catered primarily to the local elite and perhaps also to the resident British community.

The main reason for Muslim success in the gem trade was believed to lie in their skill in the techniques of valuing and in cutting and polishing gem stones. The gem stones were cut into fine shapes by the Muslims before

14. C.G.B., 1934 (Colombo, 1934), p.403.

being exported from Sri Lanka. Yet one distinguished writer accused Muslim traders of being "so primitive and their skill so deficient that a gem generally [lost] its value by having passed through their hands."¹⁵ Another critic suggested that Muslim cutters were also guilty of sacrificing brilliancy and style for size and weight.¹⁶ But these charges cannot apply to all, because some Muslims of Sri Lanka were sophisticated enough to command an international reputation for their gem stones.

One reason for the Muslims concentrating on the gem trade may have been the highly skilled yet relatively small labour force involved. The actual mining was done mainly by the Sinhalese, while the Muslims confined their work to cutting and polishing the stones.¹⁷ Profits accruing from the gem trade were great, yet the British never took any interest in it. John Davy merely observed that "like mining in general, the occupation of searching for gems is a very precarious one, and, therefore not a profitable pursuit."¹⁸ In the eyes of the Colebrooke-Cameron commissioners, too, "the gems of Ceylon were the least important of its mineral productions."¹⁹ Such an attitude suited the Muslims of Sri Lanka who were careful to keep trade secrets within the family. When Muslim companies were established they consisted almost invariably of a cooperative venture between sons and brothers. This was clearly in part because they were wary of outsiders. While the Macan Markar Company was prepared to allocate shares to its employees, the majority of its shares, and thereby the major profits, remained in the hands of family members. Perhaps owing to this chauvinism, however, members of elite Muslim families were often divided by class,²⁰ like the Macan, Gaffoor and Bawa families, and not a few companies, like S.L. Naina Marikar and Company, even had to close as a result of infighting between family members. Interestingly enough, this was replicated elsewhere. In Syria, the Muslim elite was at this time also becoming socially divided, owing to family struggles and competitions for control within their various companies.²¹

During early British rule, economic policy in Sri Lanka was ultimately decided by the British government. But more and more decisions came to

15. Tennent, J.E., *Ceylon*, vol. I (Lond. 1859), p.39.
16. C.A.R., 1887 (Colombo, 1887), H.P. Baumgartner, Govt. Agent of Matara.
17. C.S.P. no. 16, 1939 (Colombo, 1939), p.14.
18. John Davy, *An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and its Inhabitants with Travel in the Island* (Lond., 1821), p.194.
19. C.O. 54/122, Colebrooke to Secretary of State, 24, Dec., 1837.
20. Samaraweera, Vijaya, "Arabi Pasha in Ceylon, 1883-1901", *I.C.* vol. XLIX, Oct. 76, p.224.
21. Al. Kassab, Khalil, Ibrahim Mohammed, "A Comparative Study of Industrial Relations in Iraq, Egypt and Syria" (Ph.D. Edinburgh, 1977), p.47.

be made within Sri Lanka, and, in 1931, the power to pronounce on economic matters was transferred to the State Council.²²

By about 1947, nationalist sentiment had deeply penetrated Sri Lankan economic thought. British policy was now held to have created a wedge between the people and the Legislature. The members of the Legislature now expressed an ambition to change the country's economic policy from what they saw as a colonial to a national character, arguing that this would ensure a higher standard of living for Sri Lankans, even one comparable to that of Western countries.²³

It was largely under such arguments that Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (who held office from April 1956 - September 1959) propagated the idea of State controlled trade in Sri Lanka.²⁴ During his Premiership, the Government formed State Corporations in order to control trade; in 1958, the Textile Corporation was formed²⁵ and in 1959, the Hardware Corporation,²⁶ both by Act of Parliament. Later, a Gem Corporation Act was passed by Parliament in 1973, when Mrs. Bandaranaike was Prime Minister.²⁷

Once these Corporations were established, the State controlled the import of hardware and textiles and the export of gems. Sinhalese were brought into these State-created bodies, both as Chairmen and as members of the Board of Directors. For the Muslims, it meant to some extent, the final disintegration of their former monopoly in the textile, hardware and gem trades.

22. Oliver, M. Henry, *Economic Opinion and Policy in Ceylon* (Durham, 1957), p. 324.
23. *Ibid.*, p.12.
24. Oliver, M. Henry, *Economic Opinion and Policy in Ceylon*, (Durham, 1957) pp. 35-36.
25. *Gazette of the Parliament of Ceylon* (Colombo), 1958. State Textile Corporation Act, No. 49 of 1958.
26. *Gazette of the Parliament of Ceylon* (Colombo), 1959. State Hardware Corporation Act, No.46 of 1959.
27. *Gazette of the Parliament of Ceylon* (Colombo), 1971. State Gem Corporation Act, No. 13 of 1971.

TABLE IV

Name of Companies	Date of formation and Termination		Company Address	Main Import/Export commodity
1. O.L.M.A.L.M. Alim and Sons	1920 ¹	1820 ²	3rd Cross Street Pettah ³	Importing hardware and household items. ⁴
2. S.M. Assena Marikar and Co.	1840 ⁵		6 China Street, Pettah, Colombo 11. In 1915, the Company changed its premises to 14 China Street, Pettah, Colombo 11 ⁶ .	Importing Hardware and Household items. ⁷
3. I.L.M. Noordeen Hadjar & Co.	1840 ⁸		236 Main Street Pettah, Colombo 11. ⁹	Importing iron, steel, metal goods, hardware, small arms, ammunition and electrical goods. ¹⁰
4. Joonoos & Co.	1855 ¹¹	1928 ¹²	12, Grand Oriental Hotel, Colombo 11. ¹³	Exports jewellery and gems. ¹⁴
5. S.L. Maina Marikar & Co.	1859 ¹⁵	1930 ¹⁶	188 Keyzer Street Pettah, Colombo 11. ¹⁷	Importing textiles. In 1920 the company imported motor cars and spare parts for cars from Britain and Europe. ¹⁸
6. O.L.M. Macan Marikar & Co.	1860 ¹⁹		Oriental Hotel, Galle. Galle Face Hotel, Colombo 3. 16th January, 1924 the Company had its new premises in the Hotel Taprobane. ²⁰ Now as Galle, Face Court, Colombo.	Export gems and jewellery. ²¹
7. C.L. Marikar Bawa & Sons	1869 ²²		90 Chatham Street Fort Colombo-1. ²³ Now it has been shifted to Galle Road, Bambalapitiya, Colombo 4. ²⁴	Imported diamonds and silk. Exported gems and jewellery. ²⁵
8. Abdul Rahim & Sons	1872 ²⁶		43 & 44, Keyzer Street Pettah, Colombo 11. Another branch was opened in 1905. 21 China Lane, Pettah, Colombo 11, 111/112 Main Street, Galle 29/30 Colombo Street, Kandy. ²⁷	Imported household items, hardware, furniture and electrical goods. ²⁸

Name of Companies	Date of formation and Termination		Company Address	Main Import/Export commodity
9. Abdul Hussain Jefferjee	1887 ²⁹	1910 ³⁰	184, Bankshall Street, Pettah, Colombo 11. ³¹	Commission Agents to foreign companies. ³²
10. Abdul Latife & Co.	1887 ³³		23 & 35, Third Cross Street, Pettah, Colombo 11. ³⁴	Importing household items. ³⁵
11. A.H. Hamid & Co.	1886 ³⁶	1983	9 & 10 Bristol Building, Fort Colombo.1 This Building was burned down during the communal violence of 1983. Tajmahal Hotel and Hotel Majestic in Bombay was opened in 1908. ³⁷	Importing diamonds, Exporting pearls, gems and jewellery. ³⁸
12. N.D.H. Abdul Caffoor & Sons	1895 ³⁹		Gaffoor Building, Bristol Street, Fort, Colombo 1. In 1900, another branch was opened at 15 Church Street, Fort, Colombo.1	Exporting gems, pearls and jewellery. Importing diamonds. ⁴⁰

Co = Company. Bros. = Brothers.

1. Ferguson Director 1869 (Colombo 1869) p.k.
2. C.G.B. 1920, (Colombo, 1920) p.324.
3. *Ibid*, 1927 (Colombo 1927) p.324
4. *Ibid*.
5. *Ibid*, 1930 (Colombo 1930) p.xii.
6. *Ibid*.
7. *Ibid*.
8. *Ibid*., p.341 (Colombo 1934) p.3-4.
9. *Ibid*.,
10. *Ibid*., p.341 (Now hotel is called Taprobane).
11. *Ibid*., p.333.
12. *Ibid*., 1934 (Colombo 1934) p.3-4.
13. *Ibid*., 1930. p. 333.
14. C.G.B. 1930 (Colombo 1930) p.333.
15. Ferguson A.M., *Ceylon Summary of Useful information and Plantation Gazetteer for 1857*.
16. C.G.B. 1930, (Colombo 1930) p.xii.
17. *Ibid*, p.333.
18. *Ibid*.
19. *Ibid*., 1932 (Colombo 1932) p.336.
20. *Ibid*.
21. *Ibid*.
22. *Ibid*., p.305.
23. *Ibid*., p.336.
24. *Ibid*.
25. C.G.B. 1932 (Colombo 1932) p.305.
26. *Ibid*.
27. *Ibid*., p.357.
28. *Ibid*., 1934 (Colombo 1934) p.403.
29. *Ibid*., p.324.
30. C.G.B. 1932 (Colombo 1932) p.305.
31. *Ibid*, p.356.
32. C.G.B. 1934 (Colombo 1934) p. 403.
33. C.G.B. 1932 (Colombo 1932) p.306.

34. C.G.B. 1934 (Colombo 1934) p. 403.
35. C.G.B. 1934 (Colombo 1934) p.403.
36. C.G.B. 1932 (Colombo 1932) p.357.
37. C.G.B. 1934 (Colombo 1934) p.4-5.
38. *Ibid.*, p.305.
39. *Ibid.*, p.403.
40. *Ibid.*, p.305.

2. Muslim Merchants and Coconut Exporters, with Special Reference to Kalpitiya

The second group of Muslims engaged in the coconut trade. Of the several cash crops harvested in Sri Lanka that which proved the most attractive to Muslims was coconut. Although coconut was widely cultivated in Sri Lanka, its production on an international commercial scale was less widespread. In the mid-nineteenth century Muslims were said to be "almost the only section of the native population who divided this valuable culture with the English."²⁸

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Muslims of Kalpitiya in the north-west of Sri Lanka and Tuticorin on the southern tip of India were amongst the principal dealers in Sri Lankan coconut.²⁹ South India and Kalpitiya had very close links because South India is only a short distance across the sea from Kalpitiya, roughly about 60 miles.³⁰ The export from Kalpitiya included as well as coconuts, gingelly seeds, dried and salt fish, turtles, cadjans, logs, curry-stuffs. It imported sugar, goats, cows, spices, grain, pulse and flour.³¹ Sri Lanka, which never produced sugar in a sufficiently large scale for all its consumers, imported this, too, from India. At the same time, however, India, itself, was not producing enough sugar for its own consumption needs and did in fact, import sugar from Java.³² Therefore, the sugar which was coming from India to Kalpitiya may possibly have been Javan.

Historically, the port of Kalpitiya played an important role in the field of trade well before the arrival of the Europeans. It remained a major exporting port into the 19th and 20th centuries. The port was run by tide

28. Tennent, J.R., *Ceylon*, vol. II (London. 1859) p.438.
29. C.A.R. *Government Agent - North Western Province*, 1927 (Colombo 1928), p.F.25.
30. Frank, Modder, *Gazeteer of the Puttalam District* (Colombo, 1908) p.1.
31. C.A.R. *Government Agent - North Western Province*, 1927 (Colombo 1928) p.E.25. See also, *Review of the Trade of India in 1927-1928* (Calcutta 1928), p.219. The sugar which came from India to Kalpitiya was, pre-war 300 tons, post-war 400 tons. See, C.A.R. *Government Agent—North Western Province*, 1927. (Colombo 1928). p.F.25.
32. *Review of the Trade of India in 1913-14* (Calcutta, 1914), p.1.

surveyors and tide waiters under the supervision of the local *Mudaliyar*,³³ who was the sub-collector. All these posts were held by Muslims of Kalpitiya. In 1927, the *Madaliyar* was Udman Lebbe. In his day the trade was quite extensive. In 1926, 41,358 coconuts were exported from Kalpitiya to Tuticorin and, in the same year, 56 vessels arrived to deliver and collect goods from the port. In 1927 there were 58 vessels in this port.³⁴

Trade in Kalpitiya was virtually monopolised by the Muslims. One notable merchant, one Cassim Marikar, owned four vessels which he used for a transport service between Kalpitiya and Tuticorin. He also owned 10,000 acres of land, for paddy and coconut, located in or around Kalpitiya. These lands were registered by the British Government Agent of Puttalam. Unfortunately Cassim Marikar and the Marikar clan got into debt, and, in 1930, he was forced to mortgage the land to the *Chetties* of Puttalam, the people from whom he had originally bought the land.³⁵

The Muslims of Kalpitiya specialised in coconut for sound reasons. Kalpitiya is situated in the dry zone, the climatic conditions thus being highly suitable for the cultivation of coconut. The maintenance of coconut was simple and relatively cheap, most of the cultivation being undertaken in small holdings, often at the expense of paddy. The amount of labour required to work a coconut plantation was far less than that needed for coffee, rubber or tea. Furthermore, the cultivation of coconut afforded villagers who lived close by part time employment, which could conveniently be fitted into their normal patterns of cultivation. The capital involved in maintaining a coconut estate was therefore proportionately less than that needed for tea or rubber.³⁶

When, on Colebrooke's recommendation³⁷, export duties on coconuts and coconut oil were abolished on the 23rd March, 1833³⁸, prospects for Muslims improved. In the 1880s in the North Western Province 37 per cent of the total area under cultivation was devoted to coconut, and this was largely in Muslim hands. Puttalam became one of the most important of the coconut producing areas on the island. In 1907-09 the railway network which ran from Negombo to Chilaw was for this reason extended to Puttalam.³⁹

33. Native official, Chief aide to the Governor of the Colony under the British rule and the highest rank in the hierarchy of native officials.
34. C.A.R. *Government Agent North Western Province for 1927* (Colombo, 1928), p.F.26.
35. C.B.B., 1938 (Colombo, 1939), see the list of coconut estates which shows the names of the Puttalam Muslims. For example, E.S.M. Mohamed Cassim Marikar.
36. *Report of the Coconut Commission*, C.S.P. no. XII, 1949 (Colombo, 1949), pp. 11-12.
37. C.O. 54/122, Colebrooke to Secretary of State, 24 Dec., 1831.
38. C.O. 54/74, no. 114, despatch from Secretary of State to Governor, 23 March, 1833.
39. *Report of the Coconut Commission*, C.S.P. no. XII, 1949 (Colombo), 1949, pp. 17-18.

The processing and shipping of coconut destined for export to Europe by the British in the 1880s was undertaken by commercial companies.⁴⁰ Once Colombo harbour was developed under the supervision of William Gregory (Governor 1872-77),⁴¹ trading activities between Sri Lanka and India were slowly shifted there. Trading nonetheless continued between Puttalam and Kalpitiya and India until the 1940s. In fact his family claim that it was not until Cassim Marikar lost his fortune in 1930 that the trade between Kalpitiya and South India fell into a sharp decline and eventually ceased to be.

Most of the coconut lands in Puttalam were owned by Muslims and the Marikar clan of Puttalam remained economically prosperous until the 1970s. Under the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo R.D. Bandaranaike, a land reform Act was passed which allowed every family only 50 acres of land, and every child over 18 years of age another 50.⁴² As a result, the Muslims of Puttalam lost much of their coconut and paddy lands to the government.⁴³

The Muslims of Batticaloa were also engaged in the cultivation of coconut, but they exported no coconuts to South India; their trade was dependent upon the British commercial companies. As for the Muslims of Colombo, they invested in coconut estates, but were not directly involved in the exportation of coconut.⁴⁴ They concentrated instead on exporting other goods.

The financing of all the trading activities of the Muslims was simple and straightforward and was usually of a short-term nature. Systems of accounting were also simple, and were, for the most part, inter woven with personal household-finances. The idea of long-term financing of the type needed for manufacturing was quite foreign to Sri Lanka. Nor were Muslims proficient in the intricacies of company finance and management accounts. Most traders had founded their businesses by drawing the greater part of their initial capital from personal and private fortunes, other businesses, where they had any, and the pooling of resources from family and relations, especially by the sale of property and other possessions.

40. *Ibid.*, p.20.

41. de Silva, K.M., *A History of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi, 1981), pp. 286-88.

42. *Gazette of the National State Assembly* (Colombo, 1972), "Land Reform Law no. 1 of 1972".

43. *The Report of the Land Reform Commission*, 1974 (Colombo, 1974), p.25. See Table IV for the Marikars who lost their coconut and paddy land to the government of Sri Lanka under the Land Reform Law no.1 of 1972.

44. The Colombo Muslims who invested part of their capital in the coconut estates were Messrs. O.L.M. Macan Markar, S.L.Naina Marikar, A.M. Sheriff and Hon. W.M. Abdul Rahman. See list of coconut estates in *Ferguson's Ceylon Directory*, 1919-20 (Colombo, 1921).

Available evidence shows that most businesses began in a very small way. For large scale ventures in international commerce, such private sources alone were inadequate to meet business requirements. In a number of cases, funds were raised only at the cost of considerable hardship and sacrifice to the entrepreneur and his family. Yet the total sum raised from such sources could not have been very great, and, therefore, a business had necessarily to be operated on a small scale.

Muslims were sometimes dependent on a certain group of people who were both traders and money-lenders. These people came from the South Indian district of Chettinadu and, in Sri Lanka, were generally called "Chetties". Around the beginning of the nineteenth century, they were well-established in Sri Lanka as money-lenders, and, for almost three quarters of a century, they played a very important role in the country's credit structure. The first Savings Bank was not established in Sri Lanka until 20th August, 1832.⁴⁵ By 1910, the Sri Lankan Muslim traders were making much use of a new economic system which was termed "rolling money". Under this system, money was repeatedly borrowed over short periods of time from a bank or from individuals. These loans may have substituted for the earlier dependence on the Chetties. Trading between India and Sri Lanka was largely conducted from the Sri Lankan side by foreigners, mainly Malabari Muslim traders, who had blood relations living in Manner, Galle and Batticaloa.

Whilst Muslims were deeply involved in trade with India, the Middle East and Europe, the enterprising Sinhalese preferred to concentrate on other economic enterprises. They lived more typically in agriculturally developed areas and were chiefly cultivators of the land in Sri Lanka. This made the business-minded British accuse the Sinhalese of being unenterprising commercially. But Sinhalese thought land cultivation a highly prestigious form of employment. As for the Tamils from the north of Sri Lanka, they were less favoured as agriculturists and sought security in employment within various fields of the country's administration. The Muslims of Sri Lanka, however, were not found generally seeking security in government employment and only coconut planting attracted them to commercial agriculture, but, rather, they aspired to dominate in international trade.⁴⁶

After 1855 (in which year a Sinhalese commercial journal was started with a view to promoting trading activities within the Sinhalese community)⁴⁷ the image of trade as a desirable occupation for all began to change. This resulted in a relatively late Sinhalese expansion into the field

45. C.O. 54/118, Horton to Goderich, 1 Oct., 1832.

46. Jenning, Lover, *The Economy of Ceylon* (Oxford, 1948), pp.16, 34-35.

of trade. Hewavitharanes, for example, who had been furniture dealers, began in 1915 to extend their business to cover cutlery, groceries and glassware, trades hitherto dominated by Muslim merchants.⁴⁸ But the sale of jewellery and the gem trade itself remained largely in Muslim hands. The wealth, power and influence acquired through their involvement in trade provided the foundation for the rise of a Muslim elite alongside Sinhalese and Tamil elites.

Accordingly, Muslims, who had been an oppressed community during the periods of Portuguese and Dutch domination, now often felt on a par with the Sinhalese and Tamil communities and acquired a relatively high status during the course of the nineteenth century.

Overall, theirs was an enterprising contribution to nineteenth century economic development in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, there were problems confronting the community, problems which arose partly from foreign competition and partly from local reaction to the growing economic dominance of the Muslims in their particular sphere. These problems continued to grow and were slowly to bring major difficulties for the Muslims, the most devastating of which were the Sinhalese-Muslim riots of 1915.

TABLE V

The following Muslims lost coconut and paddy land to the Government under the Land Reform Law No.1 of 1972:

1.	Mr. H.M. Salhi Marikar	940	acres
2.	Mr. Mohamed Cassim Marikar	2,400	acres
3.	Mr. Naina Marikar	200	acres

47. *Valanda Sanhanava*, 10 Feb., 1885.

48. *Dinamina* 1 Feb. 1915.

8 CONCLUSION

When historians think about and discuss Islam and Islamic countries, they generally confine themselves to the Middle-East, or perhaps include Central Asia, North Africa and South-East Asia. Little or no attention is paid to other parts of the world, such as South India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives Islands, though Islam spread there and made a significant contribution to the history of those regions. This book attempts to direct attention to the Muslims of Sri Lanka under British rule. It asks questions about the political and commercial role of that community in that society and so seeks to broaden our knowledge of both Islamic history and of the history of Sri Lanka.

Muslims form the third largest religious community in Sri Lanka [according to the 1981 census, the total population of Muslims was then 1,100,350 (6.7%)¹, and their history goes back at least 1,000 years.

Some historians view the Sinhalese as in part descendants of the Aborigines (Vaddas) and in part of Indian immigrants into the island.² Some hold that the Muslims of Sri Lanka similarly derive partly from locals and partly from emigrant peoples, from the Arabian and Indian peninsulas. The Arabs came first and took Islam to Sri Lanka. Later, around the 10th century A.D., South Indian Muslims began to come to Sri Lanka to trade. The South Indian Muslims, like the Arabs, settled down in Sri Lanka in the coastal areas. They, too, intermarried and became regarded as local Muslims. However, during the period of British rule, later waves of South Indian Muslims who traded in Sri Lanka retained their homes in India and did not settle down locally. These Muslims were widely regarded as being loyal to South India. It was said that the wealth that they made in Sri Lanka was sent back to South India and that they married into the Indian Muslim community. It was even claimed that they had become dominant over Muslim trade in the early twentieth century. Some historians have seen them (and not local Muslims) as the perpetrators of the first major outbreak of communal

1. *Department of Census and Statistics*, 1981 (Colombo, 1981), "Muslim Population".

2. *Cordiner, James, A Description of Ceylon*, vol. I (Lond., 1807), p. 90.

troubles between Muslims and Sinhalese in 1915. This book disputes that and argues also that although the coast Muslims may have been responsible for starting the troubles, Sinhalese reprisals were taken against all Muslims, Sri Lankan and Indian alike.

Ethnic rivalry in Sri Lanka has been reflected in historical disputes. Some Sinhalese historians claim that the Sinhalese speaking peoples migrated to the island before the Tamils; Tamil historians claim that Tamils have an equally good claim to first arrival on the island. All agree, however, that Arabs and Persians came rather later, as traders in the years before Islam. Early Muslim settlement is well documented, and it is known to have taken place even in the eighth century A.D.

Muslim trade in the Indian Ocean produced missionaries in the market places. The Muslim shopkeeper was at times the equivalent of a clergyman. Some conversions took place. For a number of these converts, Islam was, no doubt, a highly prestigious religion. Muslims were literate, they had wide-ranging diplomatic contacts, a formal system of education and a simple but effective legal system. They were a modernising force with skills essential for the efficient administration of expanding, developing States or Empires. But Islam was not seen to pose a threat to Buddhism. The Islamic faith came to Sri Lanka peacefully, unlike in India, where the Muslims invaded the country as warriors. In Sri Lanka Muslims settled into local society, and, like their converts to Islam, they spoke Sinhalese or Tamil, the languages of the areas where they settled.

Muslim society in Sri Lanka raised fundamental questions which have concerned Muslim societies in other areas of the world. Can Muslims, with memories of political dominance, live with honour and security as a minority group in a larger non-Muslim society? Must Muslims seek to define their relations with the majority in order to live their lives satisfactorily? Such questions are the immediate concern of Muslim not only in Sri Lanka but in, for example, the U.S.S.R. and China, and they raise serious issues for Muslim societies elsewhere. The answers which the Sri Lankan Muslim community gave have their own interest.

On the eve of the Portuguese discovery of Sri Lanka, the Muslims were at the height of their prosperity. Arab merchants from the commercial centres of West Asia kept splendid establishments in parts of Sri Lanka. The Portuguese invasion led to the destruction of the Muslim monopoly of the spice trade. In usurping control of the spice trade, the Portuguese also struck a blow at Islam, thus realising both the commercial and religious goals of their eastern voyages. Unlike the Indian Muslims, the Sri Lankan Muslims

never practised Holy War (Jihad) against the Portuguese. But, in the Kandyan Province, some Muslim soldiers fought with the Sinhalese kings against the Portuguese. The Muslim farming community of the Eastern Province consisted originally of refugees from Portuguese persecution who fled to the Kandyan areas and were settled by the Kandyan King, Senarat (1604-35), in the east. Their exertions and enterprise made them successful. These farmers cultivated tobacco and coconut. The Sinhalese kings also used the Muslims as ambassadors when inviting the Dutch to drive the Portuguese away from the island. The Dutch were rather more tolerant of non-Christian religious groups than the Portuguese had been, but they treated the Muslims with some suspicion and hostility. The Dutch were intent upon breaking the cordial relationship which had grown up between the Muslims and the Sinhalese. One example is the letter the Dutch sent to the King of Kandy, Vimala Dharmasuriya II (1687-1707), saying that Indian Mughals were attempting to move from Rameswaram (in South India) to Sri Lanka and that the Muslims in Sri Lanka would betray the Sinhalese King to them. But this fabrication did not work.

From 1802, Sri Lanka became a British crown colony, administered through a Governor and Council. It was acquired largely, if not entirely, for reasons of imperial strategy. During the early period of British contacts with Sri Lanka, some Muslims in the low country were amongst the last supporters of the Dutch. Very rapidly, however, once the Dutch formally ceded the Maritime Provinces of Sri Lanka, Muslims became solidly loyal to the equally commercially-minded British. The colonial administration precipitated important changes in Muslim society. One casualty was the long and close association between the Kandyans and Muslims which broke down once the British came. The Muslims almost immediately became a potential weapon in British hands to undermine the power and influence of the kingdom of Kandy. The British used Muslim traders to elicit military information about the Kandyan kingdom and Muslim supporters helped them put down the first Kandyan rebellion in 1817-18. But when, in 1815, the Kandyan aristocracy finally surrendered their independent kingdom to the British, by signing the famous Kandyan Convention at the Royal Palace in Kandy, neither the British nor the Kandyans considered the local Muslims during these historic events.

A climate for further change in inter-communal relations was provided by the transformation which took place during the early period of British rule. A new, more liberal, economic policy emerged. For example, the British government granted Muslims permission to own properties in the Fort and the Pettah areas, replacing ownership restrictions which had been first imposed on Moors and Malabar by the Portuguese. Muslims were

appointed to the lower grades of the Civil Service, to posts such as cashiers, shroffs and translators. They were even appointed to some higher posts in the Civil Service, becoming consuls, for example, to Turkey and Persia. Due to the liberal trade policy which was practised by the British government, the Muslims were able freely to engage in trading activities.

With the growth of capitalism and of capital investment in the island, during the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and particularly with the development of the gem and jewellery trades, the Muslims became increasingly powerful as an economic group. The wealth, power and influence gained through these economic enterprises provided the foundation for the emergence of a Muslim elite in Sri Lanka alongside Sinhalese and Tamil elites. The Muslims used the marketing methods of the West. Elite Muslims modelled their life-styles on Western practices, especially in education and dress. They also sought customers in Britain.

But although the Muslim community grew prosperous, this prosperity affected only a minority. The poorer classes were scarcely altered. The wealth of the community was not divided equally amongst its members. The Muslim elite was small and very often quarrelsome.

Other Muslims took part in the expansion of coconut cultivation and in exporting to South India. Muslims from the districts of Manner, Puttalam and Batticaloa were involved in fishing, pearl fishing and the cultivation of tobacco. But none, apparently, took part in the arrack trade, to which the community had religious objections. One Muslim newspaper even gave prominence to a reader's letter to the editor, complaining that a certain Muslim in Colombo had rented out his coconut trees to a toddy tapper.

The elite Tamils turned not to commerce but more to the professions and to service in the bureaucracy. Their lands in the north were sandy, lacked rain and were not fertile. The Sinhalese elite, for their part, were often agriculturists. Cultivating paddy was traditionally a highly prestigious occupation amongst them. This doubtless helped the Muslims to prosper in commerce.

On one issue, the Muslim elite closed ranks: they maintained a firm support for the British government. This they saw as central to their commercial prosperity. By the late nineteenth century, however, trade rivalry with the Sinhalese had become marked and culminated in the anti-Muslim riots of 1915. The Sinhalese blamed the British for taking severe action against the riots, but the Muslims felt that State protection was inadequate. The troubles did not take on the positively anti-British tone that

such events had in India, however; nor did the Sri Lankan Muslims turn away from their traditional policy of accommodation with the imperial power. After Independence, they may have suffered for this.

Despite friction with the larger communities, the Muslims of Sri Lanka for a time took an active part in politics. They were nominated and elected to the Municipal Councils of Colombo, Kandy and Galle. The members who served on the Municipal Councils and those who sat on the Legislative Council were both communal activists and spokesmen for the wider society. Muslim members who stood for election in predominantly Sinhalese and Tamil areas did sometimes win seats.

During the Donoughmore period, however, the Muslims experienced a deep, internal crisis within their own community. Ironically, the very political unity of Muslims that had been forged after 1899 seemed to provide a favourable climate for the germination of seeds of ethnic, regional, social and religious divisions. Two main contenders emerged, "Moors" and "Malays". Both groups wanted separate representation in the Legislative Council. But the Donoughmore Report favoured treating the Muslims as part of one community. When the Soulbury Commission arrived in Sri Lanka, the Moors and Malays still wanted separate representation in the Council. But that Commission, too, made the same recommendation as its predecessor. Such divisions no doubt weakened the Muslim community after 1948 when it set out to try and achieve new forms of political accommodation within the novel political arena of independent Sri Lanka.

APPENDIX-I

Muslims, Moors, Marakkala: The Problem of Nomenclature

Bernard Lewis, a Western analyst of Middle-Eastern affairs, once grappled with the question, "What is a Turk?" He answered his question by putting forward the suggestion: "To be a Turk simply means to feel that one is a Turk and is called a Turk."¹ This is not a satisfactory test of the identity of the Muslims of Sri Lanka. They are called neither Sri Lankan nor Muslim.

The names used by the Sinhalese to designate the Muslims of Sri Lanka are *Hambayo* and *Marakkala*; this shows that the Sinhalese associated Muslims with the sea: *hambayo* is from *hamban* [i.e. *champana* - a type of boat] and *Marakkala* means a boatman or sailor.² The Tamils of Sri Lanka designated the Muslims as *Markayar*, which means masters of the ships.³ They also described the Muslims as *Tulugar*, which means people from Turkey.⁴

The Sri Lanka Muslims also called themselves *Sonahar*.⁵ This derives from *Yavanar*, a Sanskrit and Pali word meaning foreigners and was applied especially to Greeks or Arabs.⁶ The word *Yavanar* originally applied only to the Ionian Greeks, but later it was extended to Arab settlers who had established themselves peacefully on the coast of India.⁷ The province of Turkey under Greek rule was called *Iona*. This word *Iona* was corrupted into

1. Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Lond 1961), pp. 1-17.
2. Clough, B., *Sinhalese-English Dictionary* (Colombo, 1892), p. 725. The definitions of *hambana* Karaya; *hambana*=boat; *kara*=person from the boat. See also, (Yen) Soratha, there, *Sumangalasabdakoshaya* (Sinhalese, Blessed voice, n.d. n.p.) *Marakkala* is defined among other things as a sailor or boatman.
3. Abdul Azeez, I.L.M., *Ethnology of the "Moors" of Ceylon* (Colombo, 1907), p.8.
4. Sinnathamby, J.R., *Ceylon in Ptolemy's Geography* (Colombo, 1968), p.60.
5. Dr. Caldwell testified that the original name Kayalpattanam (South India) is Son-garpattanam (Muslim town). See Dr. Caldwell, *A Political and General History of the District of Tirunelvely in the Presidency of Madras* (Madras, 1881), p.26.
6. E.I.² (Tamil, Madras, 1979), "Ceylon".
7. Ranasinghe, A.E., *Census of Ceylon*, 1946 (Colombo, 1950), p.9.

the Sinhalese *Yavanar*.⁸ The word *Yavanar* then became *Sonahar* among the Muslims of Sri Lanka.

The Portuguese designated the Muslims of Sri Lanka as *Moors*. The origins of this word lie in the Spanish word *Mqro* and the Portuguese *Mouro* or *Mauri*, meaning the ancient inhabitants of Mauretania, later known as Morocco or Maghrab.⁹ The Dutch used the same term to designate the Muslims of Sri Lanka. But the British described them as Muhammadans.¹⁰ After Independence, the Muslims changed that term and called themselves Moors. It may be that the Muslims of Sri Lanka preferred to be identified with Moroccans. Even today the Sri Lankan State uses this word.

8. Geiger, W., (ed.) *Mahavamsa* (Lond., 1956), ch.X v.90.
9. Tennent, J.E., *Ceylon*, vol. I (Lond., 1859), p. 629.
10. C.O. 54/124-5, Alexander Johnstone's paper on "Ceylon Native Laws and Customs".

APPENDIX-II

**The Municipal Council of Colombo Established
By Ordinance No.17 of 1865.¹**

NAME OF MUSLIM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL	DATE OF FIRST MEM- BERSHIP IN THE COUNCIL	DATE OF DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNCIL	ELECTED/ NOMINATE
1. Mr. Mass Sodma Jayah Akbar.	1881 ²	1889 ³	Nominated
2. Mr. Mohamed Ismail Mohammad Haniffa.	1884 ⁴	1900 ⁵	Elected.
3. Mr. M.L.M. Zainudeen	1901 ⁶	1904 ⁷	Elected
4. Mr. Peston Jee Khan	1904 ⁸	1909 ⁹	Nominated
5. Mr. H.K. Khan	1904 ¹⁰	1912 ¹¹	Nominated
6. Mr. N.H.M. Abdul Cader	1908 ¹²	1938 ¹³	Elected.
7. Mr. P.D.Khan	1912 ¹⁴	1913 ¹⁵	Elected.

1. *C.B.B.*, 1881. (Colombo, 1882), p.157.
2. *C.B.B.*, 1881, (Colombo, 1882), p.156.
3. *C.B.B.*, 1889, Part I, (Colombo, 1890), p.77.
4. *C.B.B.*, 1886, (Colombo, 1887), p.77.
5. *C.B.B.*, 1901, (Colombo, 1901), p.D4
6. *C.B.B.*, 1901, (Colombo, 1902), p.D2.
7. *C.B.B.*, 1904, (Colombo, 1905), p.D2.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *C.B.B.*, 1909, (Colombo, 1910), p.E 2-9.
10. *C.B.B.*, 1904 (Colombo, 1905), p.D 2-10.
11. *C.B.B.*, 1912 (Colombo, 1913), p.B 2-11.
12. *C.B.B.*, 1908, (Colombo, 1909), p. E 2-12.
13. *C.B.B.*, 1938, (Colombo, 1939), p. D 1-13.
14. *C.B.B.*, 1912, (Colombo, 1913), p. B 2-14.
15. *C.B.B.*, 1923, (Colombo, 1924), p. D 2-15.

(CONT)

NAME OF MUSLIM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL	DATE OF FIRST MEM- BERSHIP IN THE COUNCIL	DATE OF DEPARTURE * FROM THE COUNCIL	ELECTED/ NOMINATE
8. Mr. B.F. Khan	1921 ¹	1922 ²	Nominated
9. Mr. Adamjee Lukmanjee	1922 ³	1929 ⁴	Nominated
10. Sir. A.R. Razick Fareed	1932 ⁵ 1942 ⁷	1937 ⁶ 1946 ⁸	Elected
11. Mr. M. Mumjee	1936 ⁹	1941 ¹⁰	Nominated.
12. Mr. F.G. Hussain	1936 ¹¹	1941 ¹²	Elected.
13. Mr. N.M.M. Ishak	1936 ¹³	1941 ¹⁴	Elected.

1. *C.B.B.*, 1921. (Colombo, 1922), p.D 1-16.
2. *C.B.B.*, 1922. (Colombo, 1923), p.D 1-17.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *C.B.B.*, 1929. (Colombo, 1930), p.D 1.
5. *C.B.B.*, 1932. (Colombo, 1933), p.D 1.
6. *C.B.B.*, 1938. (Colombo, 1939), p.D 2.
7. *C.B.B.*, 1943. (Colombo, 1944), p.D 2.
8. *C.B.B.*, 1946. (Colombo, 1947), p.D 2.
9. *C.B.B.*, 1937. (Colombo, 1938), p.D 2.
10. *C.B.B.*, 1941. (Colombo, 1942), p.D 2.
11. *C.B.B.*, 1936. (Colombo, 1937), p.D 2.
12. *C.B.B.*, 1941. (Colombo, 1942), p.D 2.
13. *C.B.B.*, 1936. (Colombo, 1937), p.D 2.
14. *C.B.B.*, 1941. (Colombo, 1942), p.D 2.

APPENDIX-III

**The Municipal Council of Galle Established
By Ordinance No 17 of 1865.¹**

NAME OF MUSLIM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL	DATE OF FIRST MEMBERSHIP IN THE COUNCIL	DATE OF DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNCIL	ELECTED/ NOMINATE
1. Mr. Ismail Lebbe Marikar Mohideen Bawa.	1882 ²	1887 ³	Elected
2. Mr. I.L.M. Abdul Cader	1887 ⁴	1894 ⁵	Elected
3. Mr. C.L.M. Abdul Karim	1894 ⁶	1903 ⁷	Elected
4. Mr. Magodon Ismail	1903 ⁸	1906 ⁹	Elected.
5. Mr. Macan Markar	1906 ¹⁰	1932 ¹¹	Nominated.
6. Mr. Magodon Ismail	1932 ¹²	1937 ¹³	Elected.

1. *C.B.B.*, 1882. (Colombo, 1883), p.56.2. *Ibid.*3. *C.B.B.*, 1887 (Colombo, 1888), p.87.4. *C.B.B.*, 1887. (Colombo, 1888), p.87.5. *C.B.B.*, 1894. (Colombo, 1895), p.D3.6. *Ibid.*7. *C.B.B.*, 1903. (Colombo, 1904), p.D 2.8. *Ibid.*9. *C.B.B.*, 1906. (Colombo, 1907), p.D 2.10. *Ibid.*11. *C.B.B.*, 1932. (Colombo, 1933), p.D 1.12. *Ibid.*13. *C.B.B.*, 1937. (Colombo, 1936), p.D 1.

(CONT)

NAME OF MUSLIM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL	DATE OF FIRST MEMBERSHIP IN THE COUNCIL	DATE OF DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNCIL	ELECTED/ NOMINATE
7. Mr A.C. Muhammad	1934 ¹	1937 ²	Nominated.
8. Mr.A.I.H.A. Wahab	1935 ³	1937 ⁴	Nominated.
9. Mr. A.C. Muhammad	1937 ⁵	1940 ⁶	Nominated.
10. Mr. Magodon Ismail	1937 ⁷	1941 ⁸	Elected.
11. Mr. A.I.H.A. Wahaab	1937 ⁹	1941 ¹⁰	Elected.

1. *C.B.B.*, 1935. (Colombo, 1936), p.D 1.2. *C.B.B.*, 1937. (Colombo, 1938), p.D 1.3. *C.B.B.*, 1935. (Colombo, 1936), p.D 1.4. *C.B.B.*, 1937. (Colombo, 1938), p.D 1.5. *Ibid.*6. *C.B.B.*, 1940. (Colombo, 1941), p.D 1.7. *C.B.B.*, 1937. (Colombo, 1938), p.D 1.8. *C.B.B.*, 1941. (Colombo, 1942), p.D 1.9. *C.B.B.*, 1937. (Colombo, 1938), p.D 1.10. *C.B.B.*, 1941. (Colombo, 1941), p.D 1.

APPENDIX-IV

**The Kandy Municipal Council, Established
By Ordinance No. 17 Of 1865.¹**

NAME OF MUSLIM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL	DATE OF FIRST MEM- BERSHIP IN THE COUNCIL	DATE OF DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNCIL	ELECTED/ NOMINATE
1. Mr. Siddi Lebbe Muhammad Cassim Marikar	1865 ²	1882 ³	Elected
2. Mr. P.T. Habibu Lebbe	1902 ⁴	1906 ⁵	Elected.
3. Mr. Usoof Ismail	1923 ⁶	1937 ⁷	Nominated.
4. Mr. M.A.S. Marikar	1937 ⁸	1940 ⁹	Elected.

1. *C.B.B.*, 1881. (Colombo, 1882), p.157.2. *C.B.B.*, 1881. (Colombo, 1882), p.156.3. *C.B.B.*, 1882. (Colombo, 1883), p.56.4. *C.B.B.*, 1902. (Colombo, 1903), p.D 2.5. *C.B.B.*, 1906. (Colombo, 1907), p.D 2.6. *C.B.B.*, 1923. (Colombo, 1924), p.D 2.7. *C.B.B.*, 1937. (Colombo, 1938), p.D 1.8. *Ibid.*9. *C.B.B.*, 1940. (Colombo, 1941), p.D 1.

APPENDIX-V

Muslim Members of The Legislative/State Councils

NAME OF MUSLIM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL	DATE OF FIRST MEM- BERSHIP IN THE COUNCIL	DATE OF DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNCIL	ELECTED/ NOMINATE
1. Hon. M.C. Abdul Rahiman	1889 ¹	1899 ²	Nominated
2. Hon. Ahmadu Lebbe Muhammad Sheriff	1899 ³	1900 ⁴	Nominated
3. Hon. W.M. Abdul Rahman	1900 ⁵	1935 ⁶	Nominated
4. Hon. N.H.M. Abdul Cader	1915 ⁷	1931 ⁸	Elected
5. Hon. S.R. Muhammad Sultan	1924 ⁹	1927 ¹⁰	Nominated.
6. Hon. M.T. Akbar	1924 ¹¹	1927 ¹²	Nominated to the Legislative Council
7. Hon. T.B. Jayah	1924 ¹³	1927 ¹⁴	Elected to the Legisla- tive Council

1. *C.B.B.*, 1890. (Colombo, 1891), p.9.2. *C.B.B.*, 1900. (Colombo, 1901), p.J 4.3. *C.B.B.*, 1890. (Colombo, 1891), p.9.4. *C.B.B.*, 1900. (Colombo, 1891), p.J 4.5. *Ibid.*6. *C.B.B.*, 1935. (Colombo, 1936), p.I 1.7. *C.B.B.*, 1915. (Colombo, 1916), p.I 2.8. *C.B.B.*, 1931. (Colombo, 1932), p.I 1.9. *C.B.B.*, 1924. (Colombo, 1925), p.I 3.10. *C.B.B.*, 1927. (Colombo, 1928), p.I 2.11. *C.B.B.*, 1924. (Colombo, 1925), p.I 3.12. *C.B.B.*, 1927. (Colombo, 1928), p.I 2.13. *C.B.B.*, 1924. (Colombo, 1925), p.I 3.14. *C.B.B.*, 1930. (Colombo, 1931), p.I 2.

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NAME OF MUSLIM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL	DATE OF FIRST MEMBERSHIP IN THE COUNCIL	DATE OF DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNCIL	ELECTED/ NOMINATE
8. Sir Muhammad Macan Markar	1924 ¹	1936 ²	Elected member for Legislative Council and then to State Council nominated.
9. Hon H.K. Saldin	1931 ³	1933 ⁴	Nominated Member for State Council
10. Sir, A. Razick Fareed	1935 ⁵	1968 ⁶	Nominated to State Council Fareed. Elected to the Parliament.

1. *C.B.B.*, 1924 (Colombo, 1925), p.1 3.2. *C.B.B.*, 1936 (Colombo, 1937), p.1 1.3. *C.B.B.*, 1931 (Colombo, 1932), p.1 2.4. *C.B.B.*, 1933 (Colombo, 1934), p.1 1.5. *C.B.B.*, 1935 (Colombo, 1936), p.1 1.

APPENDIX-VI

Municipal Council, Colombo Candidates & Voters From 1885-1944

Dates	Candidates	Elected	Nominated	Number	Percentage of Voters	Percentage of Votes of elected Members
1885	6(S) 2(T) 4(M)	4(S) 1(T) 2(M)	1(M)	30,600(S) 2,720(T) 2,500(M)	85.43(S) 7.59(T) 6.98(M)	60(S) 30(T) 10(M)
1900	15(S) 2(T) 3(M)	8(S) 1(T) 1(M)	-	36,260(S) 3,500(T) 3,000(M)	84.81(S) 8.18(T) 7.01(M)	60(S) 30(T) 10(M)
1904	9(S) 2(T) 3(M)	7(S) 1(T) 1(M)	2(M)	38,725(S) 4,026(T) 3,800(M)	83.20(S) 10.53(T) 8.52(M)	50(S) 30(T) 20(M)
1908	10(S) 2(T) 2(M)	6(S) 1(T) 1(M)	1(M)	39,200(S) 5,100(T) 4,128(M)	80.95(S) 10.53(T) 8.52(M)	50(S) 30(T) 20(M)
1916	10(S) 3(T) 3(M)	8(S) 1(T) 1(M)	2(M)	42,000(S) 6,000(T) 4,680(M)	79.73(S) 11.39(T) 8.88(M)	60(S) 20(T) 20(M)
1920	15(S) 3(T) 3(M)	7(S) 1(T) 1(M)	1(M)	43,500(S) 6,890(T) 5,260(M)	78.17(S) 12.38(T) 9.48(M)	60(S) 20(T) 20(M)
1924	10(S) 3(T) 3(M)	7(S) 1(T) 1(M)	1(M)	44,026(S) 7,120(T) 5,860(M)	77.24(S) 12.49(T) 10.27(M)	76.92(S) 15.38(T) 7.70(M)
1928	12(S) 4(T) 6(M)	5(S) 2(T) 2(M)	2(M)	45,125(S) 7,900(T) 6,120(M)	76.29(S) 13.36(T) 10.35(M)	61.54(S) 30.76(T) 7.20(M)

(CONT)

Dates	Candidates	Elected	Nominated	Number	Percentage of Voters	Percentage of Votes of elected Members
1932	10(S)	5(S)	1(M)	65,280(S)	80.10(S)	58.82(S)
	3(T)	2(T)		8,056(T)	9.88(T)	29.42(T)
	3(M)	3(M)		8,160(M)	10.02(M)	11.76(M)
1936	12(S)	4(S)	1(M)	80,179(S)	80.83(S)	60.0(S)
	4(T)	1(T)		9,850(T)	9.94(T)	30.0(T)
	4(M)	3(M)		9,160(M)	9.23(M)	10.0(M)
1940	10(S)	5(S)	1(M)	95,268(S)	81.96(S)	57.89(S)
	3(T)	2(T)		10,850(T)	9.33(T)	31.58(T)
	4(M)	3(M)		10,125(M)	8.71(M)	10.53(M)
1944	10(S)	5(S)	1(M)	1,179,627(S)	97.91(S)	52.63(S)
	4(T)	2(T)		12,850(T)	1.07(T)	31.58(T)
	4(M)	3(M)		12,220(M)	1.02(M)	15.79(M)

S - Sinhalese; M - Muslims; T - Tamil.

Percentage of the Voters and Members were calculated by the author. These statistics were obtained from the Colonial Office, London, No.30/29/146 Ceylon Blue Books, Ceylon Gazettes.

APPENDIX-VII

Municipal Council, Galle - Candidates and voters - From 1882-1937

Dates	Candidates	Elected	Nominated	Number	Percentage of Voters	Percentage of Votes of elected Members
1882	6(S)	3(S)	-	6,200(S)	91.88(S)	85.72(S)
				250(T)	3.76(T)	
1885	8(S)	4(S)	-	350(M)	5.16(M)	14.28(M)
				6,400(S)	88.89(S)	85.72(S)
				300(T)	4.17(T)	
1887	9(S)	4(S)	-	500(M)	6.94(M)	14.28(M)
				6,550(S)	86.17(S)	85.72(S)
				350(T)	4.64(T)	
1891	8(S)	4(S)	-	645(M)	8.55(M)	14.28(M)
				6,970(S)	86.48(S)	85.72(S)
				370(T)	4.59(T)	
1894	9(S)	3(S)	-1(M)	720(M)	8.93(M)	14.28(M)
				7,120(S)	85.17(S)	87.50(S)
				390(T)	4.65(T)	
1897	7(S)	5(S)	-1(M)	850(M)	10.63(M)	12.50(M)
				7,250(S)	84.72(S)	87.50(S)
				398(T)	4.65(T)	
1901	7(S)	5(S)	-1(M)	910(M)	10.63(M)	
				7,350(S)	82.77(S)	87.30(S)
				410(T)	4.62(T)	
1903	7(S)	5(S)	-1(M)	1,120(M)	12.61(M)	12.50(M)
				7,410(S)	82.42(S)	87.50(S)
				450(T)	5.01(T)	
1906	8(S)	5(S)	-1(M)	1,130(M)	12.57(M)	
				7,620(S)	82.12(S)	87.50(S)
				510(T)	5.50(T)	
1908	8(S)	5(S)	-1(M)	1,158(M)	12.38(M)	
				7,620(S)	82.12(S)	87.50(S)
				510(T)	5.50(T)	
1911	10(S)	5(S)	-1(M)	1,158(M)	12.38(M)	12.50(M)
				7,720(S)	82.06(S)	87.50(S)
				530(T)	5.63(T)	
				1,215(M)	12.31(M)	12.50(M)

(CONT)

Dates	Candidates	Elected	Nominated	Number	Percentage of Voters	Percentage of Votes of elected Members
1914	10(S)	5(S)	-1 (M)	8,025(S) 550(T)	80.29(S) 5.50(T)	87.50(S)
	2(M)	-(M)	-	1,420(M)	14.2(M)	12.50(M)
1917	10(S)	5(S)	-1 (M)	8,650(S) 560(T)	79.65(S) 5.60(T)	87.50(S)
	2(M)	-(M)	-	1,650(M)	15.19(M)	12.50(M)
1920	11(S)	5(S)	-1 (M)	9,920(S) 650(T)	79.42(S) 5.21(T)	87.50(S)
	2(M)	-(M)	-	1,850(M)	15.37(M)	12.50(M)
1923	10(S)	5(S)	-1 (M)	10,200(S) 950(T)	77.40(S) 7.21(T)	87.50(S)
	4(M)	-(M)	-	2,028(M)	15.39(M)	12.50(M)
1926	12(S)	3(S)	-1 (M)	11,100(S) 1,100(T)	75.77(S) 7.50(T)	87.50(S)
	5(M)	-(M)	-	2,450(M)	16.72(M)	12.50(M)
1930	12(S)	5(S)	-1 (M)	20,200(S) 2,600(T)	76.23(S) 9.81(T)	90.6(S)
	9(M)	-(M)	-	3,760(M)	13.86(M)	10.0(M)
1934	14(S)	5(S)	-	28,900(S) 3,712(T)	78.59(S) 10.09(T)	90(S)
	10(M)	2(M)	-	4,160(M)	11.32(M)	10.0(M)
1937	14(S)	5(S)	-1 (M)	30,500(S) 4,700(T)	72.97(S) 11.24(T)	70.0(S)
	10(M)	2(M)	-	6,600(M)	15.79(M)	30.0(M)

S - Sinhalese

T - Tamil

M - Muslims

The percentage of the voters and members selected were calculated by the author.

These statistics were obtained from the Colonial Office, London No.30/29/141 Ceylon Blue Book and Ceylon Gazettes.

APPENDIX-VIII

Municipal Council, Kandy - candidates and Voters From 1902 - 1937

Dates	Candidates	Elected	Nominated	Number	Percentage of Voters	Percentage of Votes of elected Members
1902	6(S)	4(S)	-	20,500(S) 4,400(T)	74.82(S) 16.06(T)	83.35(S)
	1(M)	1(M)	-	2,500(M)	9.12(M)	16.67(M)
1923	7(S)	4(S)	-	45,200(S) 7,200(T)	77.93(S) 12.41(T)	85.78(S)
	5(M)	1(M)	-	5,600(M)	9.66(M)	14.29(M)
1937	9(S)	3(S)	-	116,142(S) 12,500(T)	83.65(S) 9.00(T)	85.71(S)
	6(M)	2(M)	-	10,200(M)	7.35(M)	14.29(M)

S - Sinhalese

M - Muslims

T - Tamils

The percentage of the voters and members elected were calculated by the author.

These statistics were obtained from the Colonial Office, London - 30/29/141, Ceylon Blue Books, Ceylon Gazettes.

APPENDIX-IX

Municipal Council, Colombo - Candidates & Voters From 1885 - 1944

Dates	Candidates	Elected	Nominated	Number	Percentage of Voters	Percentage of Votes of elected Members
1885	6(S) 2(T) 4(M)	4(S) 1(T) 2(M)	1(M)	30,600(S) 2,720(T) 2,500(M)	85.43(S) 7.59(T) 6.98(M)	60(S) 30(T) 10(M)
1900-1912	54(S) 9(T) 11(M)	30(S) 5(T) 5(M)	5(M)	155,685(S) 18,526(T) 15,378(M)	82.12(S) 9.77(T) 8.11(M)	52.5(S) 27.5(T) 20.03(M)
1916-1928	47(S) 13(T) 15(M)	27(S) 5(T) 5(M)	6(M)	174,651(S) 27,910(T) 21,920(M)	77.81(S) 12.43(T) 8.11(M)	63.06(S) 23.9(T) 13.05(M)
1932-1944	42(S) 14(T) 15(M)	19(S) 6(T) 12(M)	3(M)	1,420,350(S) 41,606(T) 39,665(M)	94.59(S) 2.77(T) 2.64(M)	58.11(S) 31.08(T) 10.81(M)

S - Sinhalese
T - Tamil
M - Muslims.

APPENDIX-X

Municipal Council, Galle - Candidates & Voters From 1882-1937

Dates	Candidates	Elected	Nominated	Number	Percentage of Voters	Percentage of Votes of elected Members
1882-1891	32(S) 8(M)	15(S) 2(M)		26,120(S) 1,270(T) 2,215(M)	88.23(S) 4.29(T) 7.48(M)	85.72(S) 14.28(M)
1894-1903	37(S) 9(M)	18(S) -(M)	4(M)	29,130(S) 1,648(T) 4,050(M)	83.64(S) 4.75(T) 11.63(M)	100.0(S)
1906-1914	37(S)	20(S)	4(M)	31,315(S) 2,130(T) 5,008(M)	81.44(S) 5.54(T) 13.02(M)	87.5(S) 12.5(M)
1917-1926	42(S)	18(S)	4(M)	39,870(S) 3,260(T) 8,078(M)	77.86(S) 6.37(T) 15.22(M)	100.0(S)
1930-1937	40(S) 29(M)	15(S) 4(M)	2(M)	79,600(S) 11,012(T) 14,520(M)	75.72(S) 10.47(T) 13.81(M)	92.5(S) 74.0(M)

S- Sinhalese
T- Tamils
M- Muslims.

APPENDIX-XI

The Muslim Population of Colombo, Kandy and Galle

Dates	Municipal Councils	Muslim Population	Percentage of Total Population
1885	Colombo	52,208 ¹	6.79%
	Kandy	8,276	5.59%
	Galle	6,588	4.06%
1921	Colombo	72,837	5.75%
	Kandy	13,287	6.01%
	Galle	11,500	4.00%
1944	Colombo	156,572	5.17% ²
	Kandy	31,280	6.45%
	Galle	45,550	4.16%

1. *C.B.B.*, 1886 (Colombo, 1887), p. 207.2. *The Muslim Community of Sri Lanka* (Marga Institute, Colombo, 1985), pp. 63, 66, 68 and 100.

APPENDIX-XII

The qualifications for a voter

To qualify for the vote in 1885, the voters had to have certain qualifications. They had to be not less than 21 years of age, male British subjects, able to read and write in English, Tamil or Sinhalese; they also had to possess an income of not less than Rs. 1,500, or they had to occupy premises of not less than Rs. 400 annual value in town and not less than Rs. 200 annual value elsewhere. *C.B.B.* 1885 (Colombo, 1886) see the section on "Political Franchise". This system continued till 1931. After 1931 there were of course, no wealth qualifications, and everyone were allowed to vote.

APPENDIX-XIV

Distribution of Population by Ethnic Classification for the Years
1921, 1946, 1976 and 1981

Ethnic Groups	1921		1946		1971		1981	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total	4,498,605	100	6,657,339	100	12,689,897	100	14,850,001	100
Low-country Sinhalese	1,927,057	42.8	2,902,509	43.6	5,425,780	42.8	10,985,666	73.98
Kandyan Sinhalese	1,089,097	24.2	1,717,998	25.8	3,705,461	29.2		
Ceylon Tamils	517,324	11.5	733,731	11.0	1,423,981	11.2	1,871,535	12.60
Ceylon Moors	251,938	5.6	373,559	5.6	828,304	6.5(a)	1,056,972	7.12
Indian Moors	33,026	0.7	35,624	0.5	27,420	0.2		
Burghers & Eurasians	29,439	0.7	41,926	0.6	45,376*	0.4	38,236*	0.26
Malays	13,402	0.3	22,508	0.3	43,459	0.3	43,378	0.29
Veddhas	4,510	0.1	2,361	0.03	-	-	-	-
Europeans	8,118	0.2	5,418	0.08	-	-	-	-
Others	21,959	0.5	41,116	0.6	15,510	0.1	28,981	0.20
Ceylon Moors and Malays	265,340	5.90	396,067	5.91	871,763	6.87	1,100,350	7.41

(a) Sri Lanka Moors. *Burghers only.

Source: *Population Surveys 1921, 1971 and 1981* done by the Department of Census and Statistics (Colombo, 1921, 1971, 1981).

1881

1

Malays
at
881 % of Total
Malays

38.64

3 32.74

2 1.03

0 13.16

1.8 4.81

137 9.41

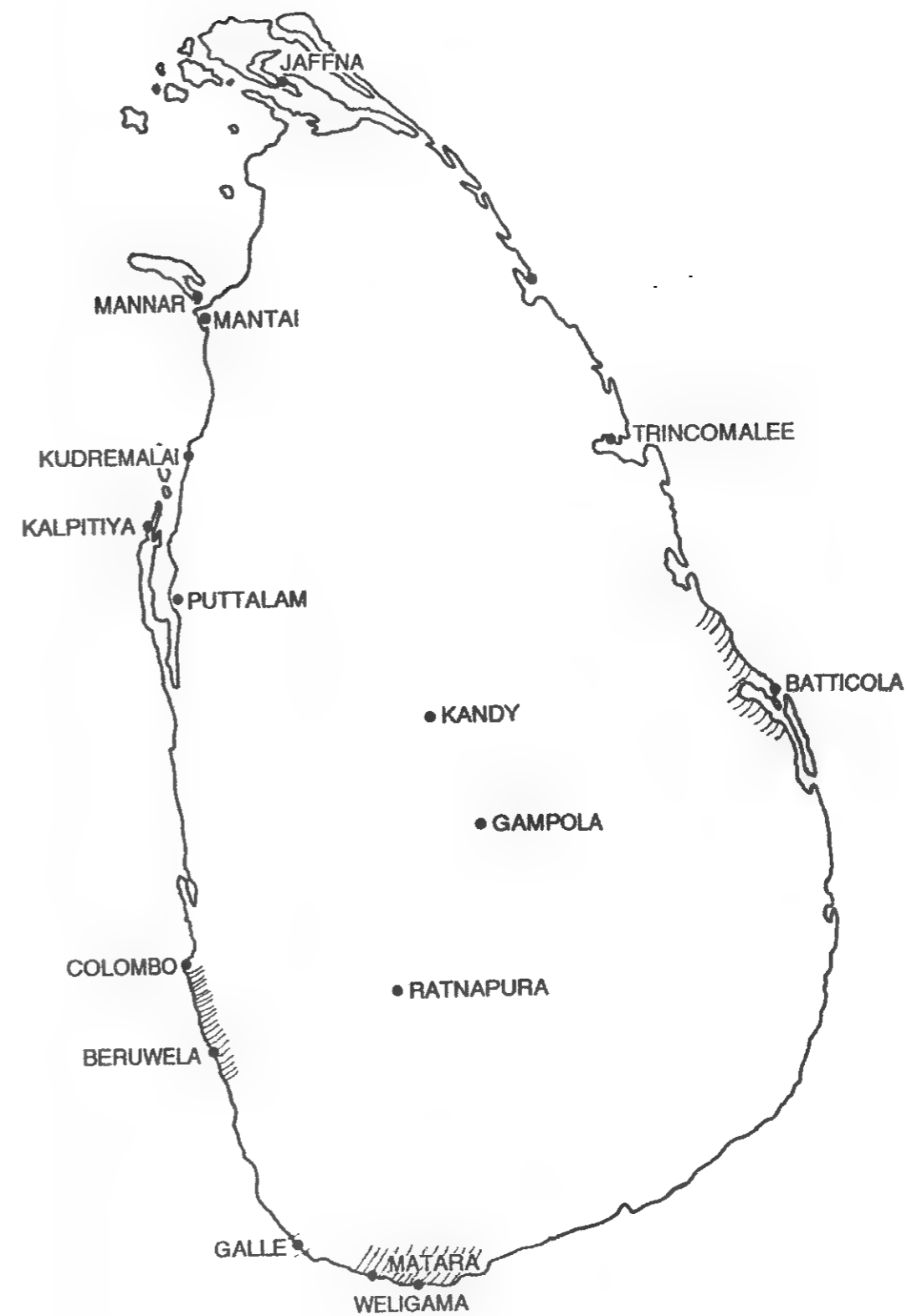
17 0.19

6,534 100.00

APPENDIX-XV Early Muslim Settlements

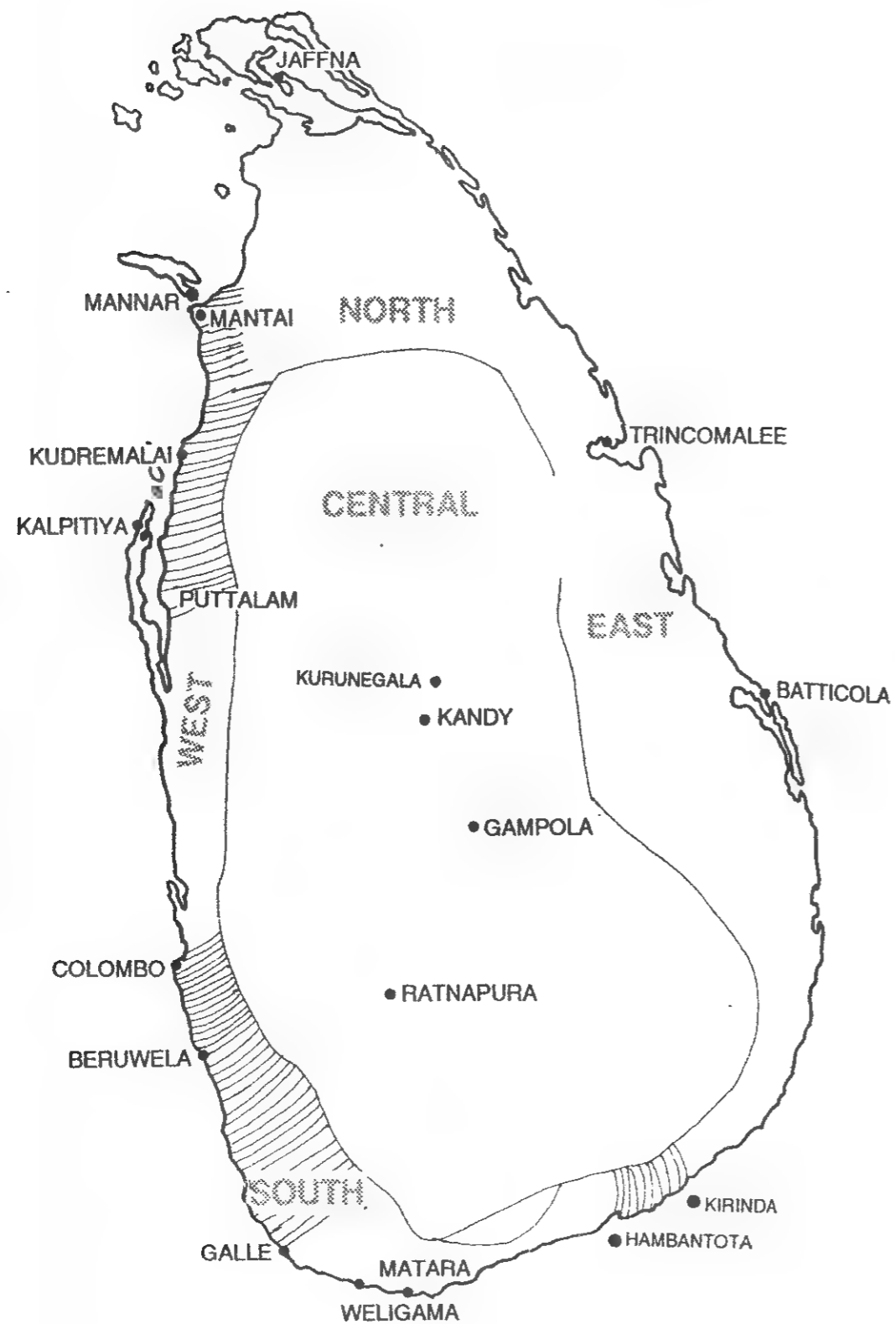


APPENDIX-XVI Muslim Settlements 1796-1815



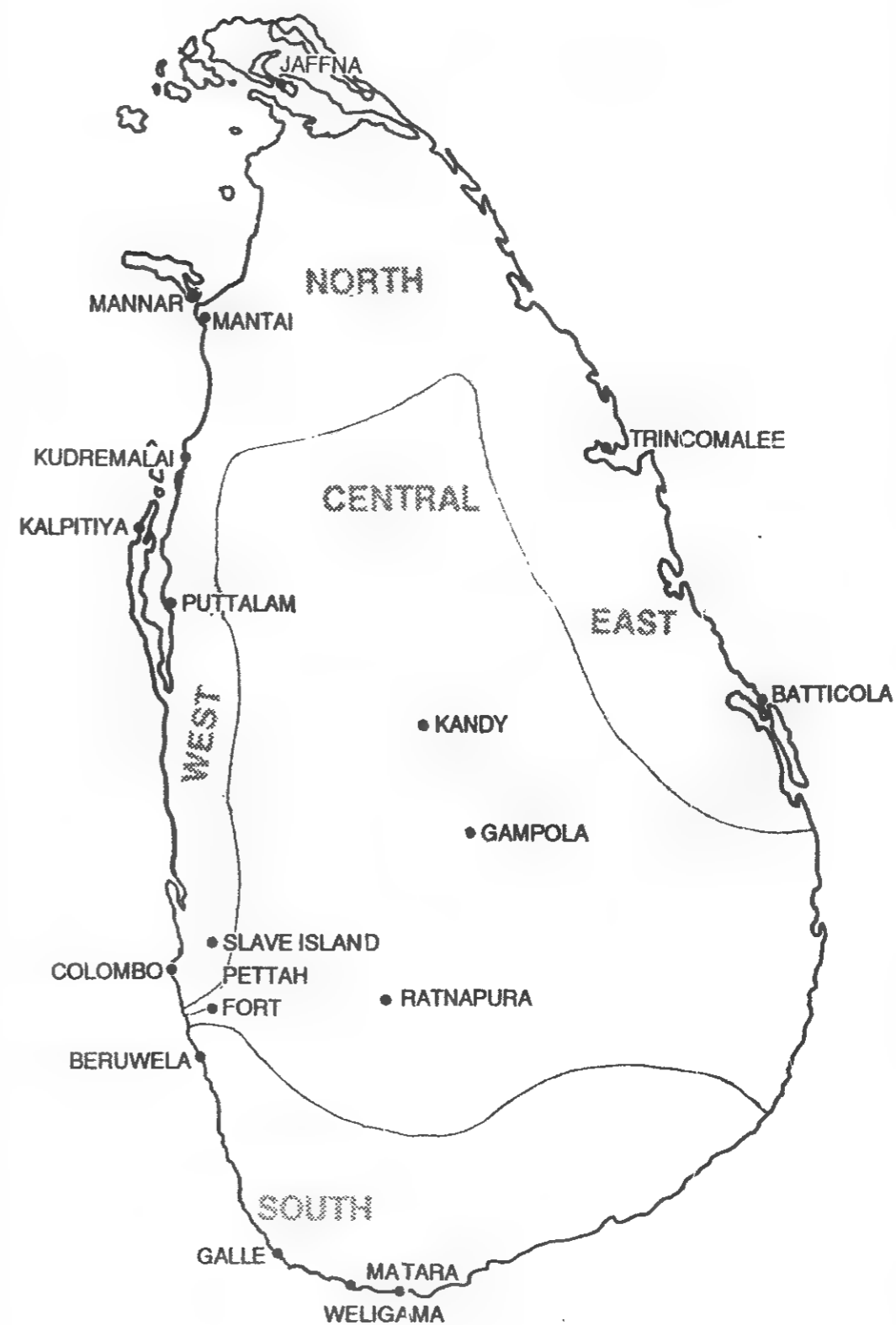
APPENDIX-XVII

Muslim Settlements 1815-1915



APPENDIX-XVIII

The Political Constituencies of the Muslims



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